# Lutheran Teacher-Training Series

## for the Sunday School

BOOK TWO

## THE PUPIL AND THE TEACHER

LUTHER A. WEIGLE, Ph.D.

AUG 24 1953

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# Lutheran Teacher-Training Series

FOR THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

PREPARED UNDER THE DIRECTION OF THE SUNDAY SCHOOL LITERATURE COMMITTEE OF THE BOARD OF THE LUTHERAN PUBLICATION SOCIETY

## BOOK TWO

## THE PUPIL AND THE TEACHER

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# INTRODUCTORY NOTE

It is with a sense of satisfaction that we present this series of Sunday School Teacher-Training handbooks. Their preparation has been in response to a frequently expressed desire on the part of many of our pastors and teachers. The committee has felt the difficulty of the task and the many conditions to be met. Much consideration has been given to the work, and not a little revision has been found necessary. To enter a field already largely occupied and vindicate our claim that such a series is needed, is no small task. These books have been made, not because there are not already many excellent books on teacher-training, but because none of them covers all the ground we deem requisite. Nothing needs to be more carefully guarded than the character of the literature we give to our Sunday schools. Especially is this true of the helps for the study and teaching of God's word. We lay emphasis upon child-nurture from the viewpoint of our Church's teaching, that baptized children are members of the Church of Christ. The responsibility of the Sunday school in teaching the child is the responsibility of the Church. The teacher, therefore, should know not only his Bible and its message, not only the laws of child-thought and the best methods of influencing the unfolding soul, but he should know what his Church stands for and what it teaches. With this conception of our responsibility we have chosen the subjects and the writers. The work speaks for itself. We believe it will be found adapted to the better equipment of our Lutheran teachers. The series consists of four books, as follows: "The Book and the Message," "The Pupil and the Teacher," "The School and the Church" and "The Lutheran Church and Child-Nurture." The aim of these books is to furnish the teachers and officers of our Sunday schools with a working knowledge of the Bible as a book and as the message of

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God to men; of the personality of the pupils, and the principles and methods to be applied in teaching them; of the organization, aim and work of the Sunday school, and of our Lutheran views of the child's relation to the Church.

SUNDAY SCHOOL LITERATURE COMMITTEE.

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# BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

This book contains no bibliography and no list of references for each lesson. It is to be hoped, however, that each training class will secure a little reference library, and that each teacher will read at least one book bearing upon the development of the pupil, and one upon the work of the teacher. The following books are recommended as a compact list, all of which a class might well own :

*To be read in connection with Part I. :*

Harrison : "A Study of Child Nature."
Forbush : "The Boy Problem."
Coe : "The Spiritual Life."
Addams : "The Spirit of Youth and the City Streets."

*To be read in connection with Part II. :*

Burton and Mathews : "Principles and Ideals for the Sunday School."
Du Bois : "The Point of Contact in Teaching."
Bryant : "How to Tell Stories to Children."
Hervey : "Picture-work."
Coe : "Education in Religion and Morals."

*For those who wish to know more about psychology and its application to teaching :*

James : "Talks to Teachers on Psychology."
Horne : "The Psychological Principles of Education."

# PART ONE

# THE PUPIL

# Lutheran Teacher-Training Series

## PART I.—THE PUPIL

### LESSON I

#### The Teacher's Work and Training

**1. What is your aim** as a Sunday school teacher? What is the work that you are set to do?

You must do **more than instruct.** It is not enough to give your pupil a knowledge, however true and full, of the Bible, or of Jewish history, or of Christian doctrine. He might get to *know* all these things without *doing* anything worth while. You must reach his life and mold his action.

Yet you must do **more than train** your pupil in right habits of action. Animals can be trained. You want, more than the action, the *will* behind it. Your pupil is to become capable of acting for himself, in a voluntary, self-initiated expression of what he knows and believes. Huxley spoke unworthily when he said that if anyone could wind him up like an eight-day clock, and guarantee that all his life he would do nothing but perfectly right actions, he would close the bargain and be wound up at once. The mechanically perfect, Huxley would be, not a man, but a clock in human form. Character is something which each must make for himself.

As a teacher you aim, then, **to develop a personality.** You want your pupil not simply to know, but to live Christianity. You want him not merely to do right deeds, but to do them of his own will, knowing what he is doing and why he is doing it, and loving the right for sake of the Father who gave him that freedom. There is but one real test of a teacher's work. God and men alike will ask you that one question. It is not, "What have you taught your pupil to know?" or, "What have you trained him to do?" but, "What sort of person have you helped him to become?"

2. **Personality grows naturally.** You cannot build it within a pupil by mechanically cementing ideas one upon the other as though they were bricks. The youngest child in your class already has a personality of his own—living, growing, maturing. And, like every other living thing, it has its laws of life and growth and development. Just as the body develops in accordance with the laws of its nature, so the mind develops from the blank of babyhood to the self-reliant personality of complete manhood in accordance with definite laws which by nature belong to it. If you are going to help a child become the right sort of person, you must understand these laws, just as truly as the gardener must understand and use the natural laws of plant development.

It is the aim of this book to tell you, in a plain and simple way, what these laws are and how you may use them. Its first part—**The Pupil**—gives the laws themselves. It is a description of how personality grows. The second part—**The Teacher**—applies these laws to your work. It deals with the principles of teaching.

3. The teacher needs, above all else, **to understand children.** But that is not easy. Children are not "little men" and "little women." They differ from adults, not simply in size and strength, but in the very quality of their powers. Growth to manhood and womanhood involves a change as real as that from caterpillar to butterfly, even if less obvious.

The body of a child is, in all its proportions, unlike that of a grown person. Relatively to the rest of its body, the head of a baby is twice as large as that of a man, and its legs but two-thirds as long. Proportionately, its brain is six times as heavy as the man's, but its muscles weigh only half as much as his.

The mental difference is even greater. The child has, of course, a less wide experience, and consequently fewer and less adequate ideas. His mental faculties, again, have not reached their full growth. But this is not all. A child's whole way of looking at things, his feelings and interests, his instincts and desires, are different. He sees the world in a perspective of his own.

In late years, many trained observers have studied children, seeking to learn the fundamental characteristics of each stage in their development. The more important results of this systematic child-study are summed up for you in the first part of this book. You will need to supplement it, however, with your own study and experience. **Observe** children for yourself, especially in their spontaneous plays and games. Be mindful of the possibility that you may misinterpret their

words and actions, and attribute to them thoughts and feelings which only an adult could have. Our grown-up point of view almost inevitably distorts our interpretation of what children do and say. One way to guard against this is to go to the "child you knew best of all." **Remember** from your own childhood how a child thinks and feels. Get back to your own point of view, your interests and activities, your reasonings and attitudes, when you were the age of those you now teach. But, after all, if you are really to know and help children, you must **share their life.** "If we want to educate children," said Martin Luther, "we must live with them ourselves." Nothing can take the place of this direct personal relationship. With it, you perhaps need know but little of the laws of the mind or of the scientifically observed characteristics of child life; without it, no amount of training can make a teacher of you.

4. **The Sunday school teacher needs as careful and adequate training as any other.** You teach the same children as the teacher in the public schools. You must deal with the same minds and the same natural laws. Every child has an inward disposition toward religion; but none has a separate mental faculty for it. It is your business, not to train a single faculty, but rather to help the whole child, with all his everyday powers of mind and heart, to become religious.

Yours is an educational work, and it calls for the best of educational methods. It is no fad or frill that you are teaching. Religion is an essential element of human life, and its highest interest. It is the only sure basis for personal morality, for social uplift, and for good citizenship. And these are the very things at which all education aims. Schools and colleges are maintained throughout the length and breadth of this land, not simply to make our children clever or skillful, but to help them become men and women of integrity and purpose, efficient members of society, and loyal to country and to humanity. **Education needs religion,** therefore. Without religious faith, no one is completely fitted for life, for citizenship, or for social service. No education is complete, nor is the realization of its aim assured, until it has been crowned with a development of the spiritual nature.

But our public schools do not give this development. Religion is the one human interest that remains unrecognized by the State in its elaborate provision for the education of future citizens. The Sunday school has a place and responsibility of its own, therefore, in our educational system. Upon it rests the completion of education.

It may be questioned whether the Sunday school can or should adopt the methods of the public school. This much, however, is

sure: *The Sunday school must feel its responsibility as an educational institution. It must realize that it shares with the public school a common task. It must do its part of the work of education with as much definiteness of aim, soundness of method and efficiency of organization, as the public school maintains. It must strive so to co-operate with the public school as to promote a unity of development within the child.*

This is a high ideal. You undoubtedly feel that many things in your own school, and in most others, stand in the way of its realization. But it is what we must work toward; and it is plain where to begin. The first and greatest need of every Sunday school is well-trained teachers. Begin with yourself. Make your own teaching, at least, what it ought to be.

But not only does education need religion; the converse is just as true. **Religion needs education.** "Go ye therefore and *teach*" was Jesus' farewell commission. Religion is more than feeling. For sake of its truth and permanence, we must *know* what we believe. If the new generation is to know God at all, and to do anything in His service, religion must be made a vital part of its early growth and education. The Sunday school is the Church of to-morrow. Martin Luther was right in his estimate of the work of the teacher:

> "For my part, if I were compelled to leave off preaching and to enter some other vocation, I know no work that would please me better than that of teaching. For I am convinced that, next to preaching, this is by far the most useful, the greatest and the best labor in the world; and, in fact, I am sometimes in doubt which of the two is the better. For you cannot teach an old dog new tricks, and it is hard to reform old sinners, yet that is what by preaching we undertake to do, and our labor is often spent in vain; but it is easy to bend and to train young trees." *

This estimate of the teacher's work is even more true to-day than in Luther's time. The world recognizes now as never before that it is in the school that society best shapes itself and perpetuates its interests and ideals. We have come to see that education is the fundamental method of social progress and reform.† Schools and colleges are multiplying, and are being brought ever closer to the concrete interests of workaday life. Everybody gets an education these days, and one can get an education in everything. Practically no human inter-

* Sermon on the Duty of Sending Children to School.
† Dewey: "My Pedagogic Creed."

est is unprovided for by the public schools of America—save religion. Inevitably, the young will come to feel that religion is of little consequence, or else is absolutely separate from the ordinary interests of everyday life.

The Church is awake to these facts, and it is fitting its methods to the situation it faces. We are in the midst of an educational revival of Christianity. The teaching function of the ministry is being emphasized. The "new evangelism" relies upon Christian nurture rather than upon emotional revival methods. National and international organizations are earnestly seeking to correlate all educational forces into a unity of effort that will include morality and religion. As a Sunday school teacher, you are stationed, therefore, at the very center of action. Yours is the strategic point in the fight for better education, for social and civic reform, and for the kingdom of God. You cannot prepare yourself too well.

5. **You have God's help in your work.** You are teaching His word, and you have the promise of the Holy Spirit's light and power. You can feel the Father's nearness as you come to Him in prayer. Without Him you would fail. You cannot help your pupil to maturity of spiritual life without God's presence in your own. Personal consecration is the first and greatest need of every Sunday school teacher.

But consecration alone will not make of you a teacher. Spirituality does not insure efficiency. God's help does not relieve you of responsibility. Paul said of himself and Apollos, "We are God's fellow-workers." That is the best text in the Bible for a Sunday school teacher. It expresses your privilege and your dignity. God will not do all the work; you are more than a tool of His, more than a mere channel for His Spirit. **God asks your help**—that is the greatest thing life can bring to anybody. The consecration He seeks is not passive submission, but a consecration of *work*—of brain and hands and feet that are able as well as willing to do something for Him. He asks you not simply to trust Him, but to remember how He trusts you. He has faith enough in you to give you a piece of work to do. And He has given you the highest work in His power to bestow—to help Him in the shaping of human lives and immortal souls. Surely you want to make of yourself a real helper of His; you want to bring to His service the highest energy, the best equipment and the most efficient methods that you can.

## QUESTIONS

The questions following each lesson are in no sense meant to take the place of an outline, or to serve as a guide for study. You should study the lesson for yourself, making a careful written outline of your own. After you have mastered it, you may then turn to the questions. They are meant to help you review the main points of the lesson, as a final step in its preparation. The leader of the training class will, of course, make out his own questions.

1. What is the distinction between instruction and training? Show how both are included in the work of the teacher.

2. What do you understand by a law of mental development? How does it differ from a moral law?

3. What is the aim of this book? Of each of its parts?

4. What are some of the ways in which a child differs from an adult?

5. What methods will you use to study children for yourself? What are some of the difficulties of each method?

6. Why ought religion be a part of the education we give our children?

7. Why do not the public schools give any education in religion? Ought they?

8. Do you feel that the Sunday school can adopt the methods of the public schools? Ought it? Give reasons for your answers.

9. Ought the Church make use of the educational method to win the coming generation? Compare the educational and revival methods of propagating Christianity, with a statement of the relative advantages of each.

10. What evidences can you cite of an "educational revival" within the Church?

11. Why is personal consecration the first qualification of the Sunday school teacher?

12. Does God's help make your own careful training for your work any less imperative? Give reasons for your answer.

## LESSON II

### Physical Activity

1. Everyone recognizes that there are certain **periods of development** through which we all pass in the growth from babyhood to maturity, and that each period has its distinctive characteristics. But there is room for difference of opinion concerning the number of periods which ought to be distinguished, and the ages at which boundary lines may be drawn.

As a matter of fact, there are no hard and fast periods, and no exact boundary lines. Growth is gradual and continuous. The baby enters into sturdy boyhood, and the boy into youth, without our realizing the precise time of transition. Sometimes new powers come suddenly; but the rule is that they ripen more or less gradually. Individual children, moreover, differ greatly. Some enter a given stage earlier, and pass through it more quickly, than others.

The most definite transition is that from childhood to adolescence. It comes usually at thirteen or fourteen, and is marked by deep-seated physical and mental changes.

From the point of view of the Sunday school, we may recognize a subdivision of the years before this transition into three periods, and three periods in the years after. The six periods and the corresponding departments of the Sunday school are:

(1) Early Childhood, under six: Beginners.

(2) Middle Childhood, three years, ages six to eight: Primary.

(3) Later Childhood, four years, ages nine to twelve: Junior.

(4) Early Adolescence, four years, ages thirteen to sixteen: Intermediate.

(5) Later Adolescence, four years, ages seventeen to twenty: Senior.

(6) Manhood and Womanhood, twenty-one and over: Advanced.

2. The most evident characteristic of childhood is its **physical activity.** Sometimes, annoyed by it, we elders call it *restlessness.* A little child is incessantly active. His tiny legs travel far in a day's play, and his hands are always busy at something. He is seldom content simply to look or listen; he wants to go to things and handle them. Every impression that goes in at his senses, it seems, comes out at his muscles.

3. It is no accident—this great place that physical activity has in the life of a little child. It is nature's provision for mental as well as physical development. It is essential to the growth of personality. This becomes clear when we think of the **results of a child's physical activity:**

(1) *Physical growth.* This is the primary need of the first six years of the child's life. It is the time of most rapid growth. A child's weight doubles during the first six months, and increases fourfold during the first three years, and sixfold during the six. Height increases nearly fifty per cent the first year, and nearly seventy-five per cent within the first three years; while at six it has been more than doubled.* That this growth may be normal, the child needs proper physical conditions—good food, pure air, the light and sunshine of God's out-of-doors, and plenty of sound sleep. And for the best realization of all these conditions, and the assurance of healthy growth, there is constant need of physical activity and exercise.

(2) *Physical development.* Because growth and development usually take place together, we often use the terms as though they meant the same. But growth means simply increase in size; while development stands for a change in the character of the bodily tissues, making for maturity and strength. Sometimes growth takes place without development, and then the child is fatty, flabby, and apt to be sickly. There is only one way to insure development—through exercise. Food and air and sleep may cause the body to grow, but the only way to get good, hard muscles is to use them. A child craves physical activity because nature wants its body to develop. Such exercise, moreover, develops the nervous system as well as the muscles. Strength and skill, steadiness and self-control, are some of its results.

(3) *New sensations.* The child is a discoverer in a strange, new world. He does not passively wait for things to force themselves upon him; he pushes out to seek knowledge. Each bit of activity widens his experience. It is really an experiment. It brings new sensations, new information, better understanding; and lays open new possibilities.

(4) *Use and meaning.* The child's physical activity does more than bring sensations; it determines their meaning. The meaning which anything has for a child depends upon what he can do with it. He is not ready to appreciate the structure of things, to discriminate

* The best statement of the facts of growth, with a discussion of their bearing upon education, is Tyler's "Growth and Education." Here, and in succeeding chapters, we make a rough use of figures which he gives exactly.

forms and textures, or to comprehend definitions. He is interested primarily in the use which a thing may have, and especially in that use to which he himself may put it. Ask any child to tell you what some familiar nouns stand for, and his answer will bear witness to this fact. "A knife is to cut," "Coffee is what papa drinks," "A circus is to see the elephant"—are typical children's definitions. Professor Barnes found that 80 per cent of the definitions of a list of common nouns which six-year old children gave him, were in terms of activity and use. This percentage decreased to 63 per cent for children of seven and eight, 57 per cent for those of nine, 43 per cent for those of ten and eleven, and about 30 per cent for those of twelve to fourteen.*

(5) *Habits.* A thing done once is easier to do again. What a child does becomes a very part of himself through the working of the law of habit. Grouping these last three results—new sensations, meanings and habits—we see that the child's *mental and moral development* is in a great degree dependent upon his physical activity.

4. **The causes of a child's physical activity** are to be found in deep inner laws of his being. He is so made that he must be active.

(1) He is impelled to act by the *energy* that is being constantly generated within him. Energy always seeks an outlet. The heat of a firebox begets the steam which drives a dynamo, and the electric current gives forth light throughout a great city. Human energy is no exception. It finds its natural outlet in physical activity. Much of the child's activity is the spontaneous expression of the bounding life that quickens every fiber of his being.

(2) He is impelled to act by the *sensations* he gets. He reaches for everything he sees, turns toward the sound he hears, plays with what he touches. His senses rouse his muscles. His impressions call forth *reactions.*

We can see why this should be so if we think for a moment of the structure of the nervous system. It is made up of three classes of cells—sensory, associative and motor. The sensory cells receive impressions; the motor cells impel the muscles to act. The associative cells connect the sensory with the motor, and so connect impressions and actions. These three classes of cells may be coupled up in a myriad intricate ways, yet they are always so related that the goal of a sensory current is an associative cell, and that of an associative current is ultimately motor. The natural result of every sensation, therefore, is an action. Every nerve current tends to go the whole way, and so to issue in activity.

* Quoted by Bagley: "The Educative Process," p. 80.

The nervous system has been well defined as a mechanism for translating sensations into movements. Its function is to receive impressions from the outside world, and to respond to them with appropriate actions. Strike at the fly that annoys you, and he is gone before your hand touches him. His nervous system received an impression from the movement of air and responded with an action that took him out of danger. Strike laughingly at a friend, and he will dodge the blow before he thinks—his nervous system has connected action with the sight of the threatening arm. The nervous system is made for action—and to adapt actions to situations. Every sensation becomes an impulse.

(3) The child is impelled to act by his *instincts.* His nervous system contains certain pre-established pathways which incoming currents are sure to follow, as they go on to discharge themselves in action. These pathways are natural and hereditary. They constitute great inborn tendencies to act and feel in certain ways. Fear, shyness, curiosity, imitation, play, acquisitiveness—these are only a few of the natural tendencies which every child possesses, which determine the character of his reactions to the things that present themselves to him. Not all of these tendencies, of course, are present at birth ; but they manifest themselves in the course of the natural growth and development of the nervous system. Each stage of development has its own dominant instincts, naturally and inevitably determining its actions and attitudes. A young child is just as certain to carry things to its mouth as is the little chick to peck at any small object within range. And at a certain age a child will fear the dark, a boy will love to fight, and a youth will conceive a tender passion, just as naturally and with as little consciousness of the reason why.

(4) The child is impelled to act by his *ideas.* For him, as a rule, to think is to act. He says whatever comes into his mind ; he goes at once to seek the toy of which he happens to think. He reacts as directly to the presence of an idea or memory in his mind as to his sensations. It matters nothing where the idea has come from. We express it by saying that a child is naturally *impulsive ;* or, if the idea has come to him from someone else, that he is very *suggestible.*

We can see why this should be so if we think again of what we just learned about the nervous system. Ideas and memories are always accompanied by nerve-action within the associative cells which make up the gray matter of the brain. And a nerve-current in the associative cells, we saw, tends naturally to run over into the motor cells,

and so to result in action. Ideas, therefore, are dynamic ; they become impulses.

5. **These principles of action hold true for us who are grown as well as for little children.**

*The law of motor discharge* remains true. We, too, are impelled to action by every nerve current. Every sensation calls for a response ; every idea is an impulse. See an attractive book, and it is hard to resist picking it up ; think of the pleasure of a tennis game, and you feel the impulse to play. *Action of some sort is the natural outcome of every nerve current, and hence of every sensation and idea.*

*Our actions, again, are reactions.* They depend upon the situation ; we fit them always to the circumstances. No action possesses an intrinsic value. "There is a time," as the Preacher says, "for every purpose and for every work." To do the right thing at the right time, we all naturally seek ; and we do what we do at any moment because there seems to be something in the present situation that calls for just such action. *Human actions are seldom without motive, and most motives are rooted in our sense of the situation.*

To the end of life, moreover, *the development of personality depends upon action.* It is what we do, more than what we see or feel or think, that determines what we are and what we become. Life's real meanings are determined by its deeds. Thoughts are idle that make no practical difference. No bit of knowledge is really learned until it grips the life.

It is action, as a matter of fact, that *measures the final worth of any life.* We are in the world, not to look on, but to do. He lacks manhood who lives but to be amused by the passing show. Work bestows meaning upon life, and brings unity to its scattered impulses. Work gives a man dignity and poise ; it shows forth the divinity that is within him. Not just to find out God's wisdom are we here, but to work for Him and with Him in the building of His kingdom.

6. **We differ from little children in the voluntary control** which we have acquired, and which they do not yet possess. We are able to select from among our sensations those pertinent to our purposes, to prevent immediate reactions, and to check impulses by taking thought. *Through experience, we have gained self-control.* The child, on the other hand, has had little experience, and consequently possesses few ideas, and is able to grasp only in a very limited way the meaning of the situations he faces. We cannot expect him to have self-control. These great laws which in us are so complexly interwoven with the results of experience, appear in his life in their simplest

and clearest form. His energy must find immediate physical expressions. He reacts at once to his impressions, and is drawn here and there by the passing attraction of the moment. He thinks of but one thing at a time, and it comes right out in impulsive action. He is an eager bundle of instincts of which he is not yet master.

Yet, be it remembered, it is out of this very turmoil of activity, all lacking in unity as it is, and out of it alone, that growth and development, experience and intelligence, habit and will, can come. And so it is plain what our attitude toward it should be. We will seek to use and direct, rather than repress, the physical activity of childhood. The child who is forced to be quiet and to sit still is failing to get what he most needs to build for him a sturdy body, a sound mind, and the right sort of character. "A child shut up without play," said Martin Luther, "is like a tree that ought to bear fruit but is planted in a flower-pot." More than that, repression works within him a positive injury. The child whose energy is not permitted to find its natural outlet is bound to become nervous and irritable; and every now and then the tension will break in an outburst of mischief or of passion. Unhappiness and discouragement, distrust and alienation, sullenness and defiance, or else weak-willed dependence—are some of the results within a child who is continually assailed with don't's.

## QUESTIONS

1. Into what periods may we divide the development of personality? What are the corresponding departments of the Sunday school?

2. What is the distinction between growth and development? Show how physical activity is essential for each.

3. Give figures to show the rapidity of growth in early childhood.

4. Show how the child's mental development depends on his physical activity.

5. What do you understand by a sensation? A habit?

6. Show how sensations impel the child to action. What do you understand by a reaction?

7. What is an instinct?

8. Why do ideas impel the child to action?

9. State the law of motor discharge.

10. In what sense are our actions always reactions?

11. How do we differ from the little child in voluntary control?

12. What attitude should parents and teachers take toward the child's physical activity?

## LESSON III

### Early Childhood

We begin the study of the separate periods in the development of personality with early childhood—the first six years of life.

1. **The little child lives in a world of play.** Most of us grown people live in a world of work. The difference, we imagine, is that the things we have to do are of real value, while what the child does is not.

But the child's play is of real value. It is more than a means of occupying him, or of working off his surplus energy. It is more even than a means of exercise to promote physical growth and development. It is a *preparation for life*. Groos has shown that young animals instinctively anticipate in their play the activities which will be of use in their maturity. So, too, the play of children develops instincts and powers which will later be needed. Girls play with dolls and tea-sets; boys like to make things, build houses and dams, keep store or play at soldier. Colonel Parker used to say that "play is God's method of teaching children how to work."

More than this, play is essential to the best *general development of body, mind and character*. Coe sums it up well:

> "Quickness and accuracy of perception; co-ordination of the muscles, which puts the body at the prompt service of the mind; rapidity of thought; accuracy of judgment; promptness of decision; self-control; respect for others; the habit of co-operation; self-sacrifice for the good of a group—all these products of true education are called out in plays and games." *

And they can be gotten nowhere else so easily and surely, or so early in life. A child without play matures quickly, but his life will always remain stunted. "The boy without a play-ground is father to the man without a job."

The difference between work and play is really one of *inward attitude*. Any activity is play in so far as it is thoroughly enjoyed; it is work if we do it only because we must to gain some end. The negro stevedores on the Mississippi play while loading a steamboat, with

* Coe: "Education in Religion and Morals," p. 242

their songs and rivalry; yet baseball is work for the professional player who must keep at it day after day. The advance from childhood to maturity ought not to mean so much a stepping out of the world of play into the world of work, as a carrying over the play spirit into the responsible activities of manhood and womanhood.

2. **The play of early childhood** has its own distinctive characteristics:

(1) It is play, *not amusement*. The child is never content simply to watch the activities of others, and to be amused by things done for him. He wants to enter into the action himself.

(2) The little child cares nothing for *games*—that is, for play subject to rules. His plays are almost wholly free and unregulated, and any attempt to dictate when or where or how he shall play is apt to meet with failure. Through imitation, however, simple games may be taught. If *you* play in a certain manner with evident enjoyment he will want to do the same thing.

(3) Children of this age play *alone*. If they do play with one another, their enjoyment is self-centered. There is neither rivalry nor team play.

(4) The child's play is at first wholly a matter of the *senses* and *muscles*. He uses neither in any accurate or definite way, but finds keen enjoyment in the free repetition of some activity or sensation. A natural *rhythmical tendency* is soon manifest. Jingles and songs and rhythmic movements are a source of keen delight, while many a story or bit of poetry that is not at all understood will yet be enjoyed for the cadence of the voice that reads or tells it.

(5) Plays exercising the *memory* and *imagination* begin about the third year. From that time on to the end of the period the child's play becomes largely *imaginative* and *dramatic*.

(6) Throughout the period the child's play is *imitative*.

3. **Eager and impressionable senses** are characteristic of early childhood. In this strange world where the child one day finds himself, there are so many new things to see and hear and feel that he has little time, even if he should have the powers to think over his experiences and to inquire into those abstract qualities and relations with which we older people interest ourselves. The mind of a child is intensely concrete. He lives in a world of perception, rather than of thought. Round-eyed, quick to hear and eager to touch, he is busy *absorbing* the world about him.

And he is not content simply to await sensations and to absorb what

comes to him ; he actively seeks new experiences. **Curiosity** is one of the earliest, as it is one of the most permanent, of the human instincts. It manifests itself first as *sensory curiosity*—the tendency to prolong sensations, to experience them again, and to seek new ones. Later, *rational curiosity* appears—the desire to learn the relations which things have to one another, and the tendency to draw and test conclusions respecting matters not directly experienced. The curiosity of early childhood is predominantly sensory, though rational curiosity begins to reveal itself in the latter half of the period, as anyone well knows who has had to answer a child's "How?" "Why?" "What for?" and "Where from?"

Curiosity often manifests itself in undesirable ways—in too persistent questioning, in pulling things to pieces, and in general mischief. These should be checked ; but care must be taken not to injure the instinct itself, or to destroy the child's natural thirst for knowledge. His open senses and eager mind are your heaven-sent opportunity. And the world needs men who can bring to its problems a free spirit of question and discovery. It owes to such men its science and philosophy and the achievements of civilization. Your problem is, not to repress the child's curiosity, but to turn it toward worthy objects, and to develop it in right directions.

The child's senses will drink in anything that is presented to them. He is unable to discriminate between good and bad, true and false, wise and foolish. There is only one safe rule : *Do absolutely nothing before a child that you would not have him copy. Let nothing touch his senses that you would not have enter permanently into his life.* There may be exceptions ; undoubtedly some things which a child sees and hears make no permanent impressions upon him—*but you cannot tell when the exceptions come.*

You cannot tell by questioning a little child what things have made a lasting impression upon him—for many reasons besides the likelihood that he will not catch the drift of your questions. We all know that many things which we see and hear modify our thoughts and actions in ways of which we remain unconscious ; and this is far more true of the child. Moreover, the *memory* of a child is different from our own. It is exceedingly impressionable and retentive, yet with little power to recall. A child's impressions are lasting. Old people sometimes remember the events of their childhood more clearly and vividly than those of later life. Yet the child's power to recall any impression when he wants it is comparatively weak. He has made but few associations, and those without concentration of attention.

What he can recall is no test, therefore, of what his memory has gotten and is retaining.

4. **A little child is intensely imaginative.** Imagination is the power mentally to reproduce sensations. It has two great uses. First, it is the *picture-making faculty* of the mind. It enables us vividly to see and hear and touch absent things as though they were present, and to picture abstract and spiritual truths in concrete ways. Second, it is *inventive* and *productive*. While it is limited to a reproduction of past experiences—it can create no images for which there have been no previous sensations—it brings bits of them together into totally new combinations. It gives birth alike to fairy stories and to great novels, to Handel's oratorios and to the hypotheses of a Newton; it inspired Columbus' discovery of a hemisphere and the Wrights' conquest of the air.

The imagination of a little child manifests both these characteristics. He thinks in concrete pictures, because he has little power of abstraction, and has not yet learned the distinction between the material and the spiritual. His inventive fancy runs riot, for he does not yet feel the stern logic of facts.

(1) *He tends to personify everything.* He draws no sharp line between the animate and the inanimate, between persons, animals and things. And as the first and most definite objects of his knowledge are persons, and the terms he understands best are those which stand for actions, he interprets everything in personal terms.

> "Jean Ingelow tells us that when she was a little girl she was sure that stones were alive, and she felt very sorry for them because they always had to stay in one place. When she went walking she would take a little basket, fill it with stones and leave them at the farthest point of the walk, sure that they were grateful to her for the new view." *

The child's conception of the world about him is in fact akin to that of the primitive savage, to whom every natural object seemed alive. This accounts for what is sometimes called the "superstition" of children. The term is wrongly applied—children can no more have superstitions than they can have scientific ideas. The fact is simply that the child's conception of the world makes tales of miracles and impossible wonders, of fairies, elves and angels, as probable as matters of sober fact; and he delights in them because they appeal to his love of action and to his sense of wonder.

* Tanner: "The Child," p. 124.

(2) *He lives in a world of make-believe.* His play we have seen, is *dramatic*. Father's walking-stick becomes a horse, himself a soldier captain, and sticks of wood the enemy. He turns himself into a railroad engine, and goes even about the room puffing and driving his arms like driving-rods, backing and switching, and coming to a stop with the hiss of escaping steam. For hours or even for days he becomes another person or an animal. Lonely children often play with imaginary companions; and cases are to be found where such creatures of fancy abide and play a very real part in the child's life for months or even years. "Let's play we're sisters," said two little sisters who had been quarrelling; and the imagined relationship brought the peace which the real one had failed to maintain.*

(3) *He makes no clear distinction between imagination and reality.* Personifying natural events as he does, he may fail to distinguish between the real happening and his interpretation of it. Beneath his make-believe there often runs an under-consciousness of its unreal character; but like as not he forgets, and grows really afraid of the make-believe lion, or cries over some imagined trouble. It is this confusion of fact and interpretation, of reality and play, that is responsible for many so-called "lies" of children. They call, not for punishment, but for comprehending sympathy and patient training.

(4) *He employs and understands symbols.* It is perfectly natural to a child to use symbols. In his dramatic play he has no difficulty in making one thing stand for another. He is not hindered, as we generally are, by a feeling that the symbol ought to resemble the thing it represents. Chips of wood can represent soldiers just as easily as the most elaborately uniformed tin warriors. The magic of his imagination can transform the dullest and most prosaic of objects.

Yet he cannot understand the symbolism of grown people, and is often absurdly literal in his interpretation of figures of speech or "object-lessons." It is because our symbols are of a totally different character from his own. They depend for their value upon some likeness to the thing they represent, and bring out the truth in terms of analogy. Take as examples some of the figures of speech which we constantly use to express religious truths—that we are "the sheep of His pasture," that "our cup runneth over," that Jesus is the "Lamb of God," that the "cross" is the way to the "crown." It takes more than the imagination to appreciate these analogies: it requires a reasoning power which the child does not yet possess. Moreover, we

* This illustration comes I think from Miss Harrison, but I cannot now find it.

make too big a demand upon his little mind when we expect him to deduce from these concrete figures an abstract spiritual truth whose reality he has not yet experienced. In his own natural symbolism he lets one known thing stand for another equally concrete and well-known—chips for soldiers, or stick for horse; but here we are asking him to let a known thing stand for something he knows nothing about.

(5) *He is intensely eager for stories.* They must be full of action and of pictures, simple and without intricacy of plot. They must lie close enough to the child's own experience to rouse definite mental pictures, yet have enough of mystery and novelty to stir his feelings. They must have a climax, and must lead straight to it and then stop. They must contain some rhythm or repetition in which he can delight. Above all, they must be told by one who himself retains the spirit of childhood, and who sees and feels the things he tells. Such stories the child will call for again and again, and often he wants them repeated in the very words that were used before.

5. **A little child is credulous and suggestible.** He believes anything you tell him, simply because of his lack of experience. He has no fund of established ideas as the rest of us do, to serve as a basis for distinguishing truth from falsehood. The suggestion remains uncontradicted, and issues in action from the very positive power that all ideas possess. Many little letters and prayers every year witness how real Santa Claus is to the child; real, too, is the "bogy-man" who will "ketch you ef you don't watch out." Make light of a little tot's fall and heal the bump with a kiss, and he will not cry; while you can bring on a very agony of tears if you pity him enough.

It is not only ideas that we wish the child to believe and act upon, that have this suggestive power. Chance remarks, unthinking actions, personal attitudes, are often more potent than direct suggestions. Objects, too, as well as persons, may "put ideas into his head" which are hard to get rid of.

6. **The little child is exceedingly imitative.** Imitation is one of the earliest of the instincts, and remains throughout early childhood a marked characteristic of the period.

It may be looked upon as a form of suggestion. We are more likely to be influenced by what others do than by what they say. At any time of life, the action of someone else is the most potent of suggestions.

But imitation does not depend at all upon the possession of ideas. It is often reflex. The presence of a stammering child at school has

a bad effect upon the speech of other children. The temper of your class is likely a reflection of your own. Smile, and they smile with you; frown, and they will soon give you reason to.

*Reflex imitation* is present almost from the beginning. *Dramatic imitation* we have already considered. It appears about the third year. *Voluntary imitation* begins a little before—when the child purposely seeks to act like another does. His repetition of words, as we teach him to talk and he tries the difficult pronunciations again and again to secure our approval, is an example. He imitates single actions rather than persons; he wants to *do* something like uncle, rather than to *be* like him.

7. **A child of this age is naturally self-centered.** He knows no motives other than those of his own pleasure and pain. His little acts of generosity are done only for the approval or pleasure they bring. The social and altruistic instincts have not yet awakened. If he plays with other children, or if he likes to be with others, they are ministers to his own enjoyment. He is the center of his world, and everything and everybody in it exists for him. The word "my" is the great one in his vocabulary. Yet this is not selfishness; it is simple nature.

It is tempered by the fact that he is *very affectionate* and is *keenly sensitive to the personal attitudes of others.* He finds the greatest of pleasure in a smile or caress, and is heart-broken at a frown. A boy of two wept bitterly because he had caught a look of surprise and disapproval on the face of a visitor when he had struck at his mother. A week after he saw the visitor again. "Do you remember," he plaintively queried, "how you looked when I hit mamma? I don't like you to look that way." The child's feelings are not deep or lasting—his tears come like April showers and are forgotten—but they lie near the surface. There is truth in the old adage that one may trust a man whom children and animals like. The child, at least, instinctively fathoms the dispositions. Nature has put him close to the heart of men.

Here lies his defence when one would impose upon his credulity. He soon comes to know whom he can believe. His faiths become personal. He has implicit confidence in those who love him, and learns to reject the suggestion of meanness or of ridicule. We are sometimes urged to have the faith of a child—and rightly. For the faith of a child is at bottom faith in a Person.

## QUESTIONS

1. What is the distinction between work and play? What are some of the values of play in the life of a child?

2. Describe the distinctive characteristics of the play of early childhood.

3. Why are the little child's senses more impressionable than ours?

4. In what forms does the instinct of curiosity manifest itself in early childhood? What should be our attitude toward it?

5. What are some of the peculiarities of a little child's memory?

6. What do you understand by the imagination? What are its functions?

7. Describe some of the ways in which the imaginativeness of early childhood is revealed.

8. Why is a little child credulous?

9. What do you understand by a suggestion? How does it differ from a command? How does an indirect differ from a direct suggestion?

10. What is reflex imitation? Dramatic imitation? Voluntary imitation? When does each appear in the life of a child?

11. Is a little child selfish when he takes all the playthings of the nursery to himself? Give reasons for your answer.

12. Why is it best that a child should be self-centered?

13. Can you cite any illustrations of a little child's sensitivity to the personal attitudes?

## LESSON IV

### Middle Childhood

There is no evident transition from early to middle childhood. Most of the characteristics of the former period belong to this. The child of six to eight is still impulsive and suggestible. He is active and restless, and not yet able to give sustained attention, or to concentrate himself upon a disagreeable task. His real life is one of play, and your appeal must be to senses and imagination. He is still self-centered and the creature of capricious instincts and feelings.

Yet the child of six or more differs from the one who has not reached that birthday. He has had a wider experience, of course, which gives a richer meaning to every perception and a more definite control for every impulse. But the great difference lies in the fact that *he has entered school.* That gives him a wholly new view-point. His world has changed. He has now a place of his own in the social order, and enters into a wider circle of companionship and a more definite round of responsibilities than home or kindergarten had made possible.

1. **Physically, this period is one of rapid growth,** though less rapid, of course, than that of the former period. From six to nine, weight increases 32 per cent, as opposed to 45 per cent during the years from three to six. Height increases somewhat over 13 per cent, against 25 per cent in the preceding three years. While the death-rate continues to decrease, there is about the eighth year a rapid increase of liability to sickness. This is to be traced in part to conditions associated with the appearance of the permanent teeth, and in part to the relative weakness of the heart, which has less than one-third of its adult weight, and must force the blood over a body which has two-thirds of its adult height. The heart is especially pushed, of course, by muscular exercise, of which the body craves a great deal. This is doubtless the explanation of the quickness with which an eight-year-old becomes fatigued.

2. **Physical activity and play** characterize this period of childhood as well as the first. But there are manifest differences:

(1) *Activity is more purposive and controlled.* Whereas the younger child found delight in the mere activity itself, the child of this period

begins to find pleasure in what he can accomplish. Eyes and hands and feet are used in play, no longer in mere aimless exercise, but for sake of some success of quickness or accuracy or strength. He wants to make things, to achieve something. Yet, be it remembered, he has not developed enough control to be able to hold very long to a tedious task, or to see through complications and conquer many difficulties in the pursuit of an end. You must give him simple, definite things to do, and not too hard.

(2) *Play takes the form of games,* at first with very simple rules, and then more complex.

(3) *The child no longer plays alone,* but with companions; and rivalry and competition begin. Their games provide contests of power or skill in which each strives to win.

(4) *Imaginative play,* with its little dramas of make-believe, reaches its culmination in the first half of this period. It continues until adolescence, though constantly decreasing in importance, to be replaced by games of the competitive sort. In this period it often takes the more definite form of acting out some story that has been heard or read—a form in which it may well be used educationally, not only in this, but in succeeding periods.

3. **The child's senses are as eager as ever,** and to them we must appeal in our teaching. But now he is better able both to use his senses, and to understand the messages they bring. His years of experience, few as they have been, enable him to comprehend much that he once could not. School life is widening his knowledge and perfecting his powers, and casts a new light upon everything that presents itself.

It has been well said that we are able to see as much in anything as we can put into it. It is not the mere seeing or hearing, but the *meaning* which sights and sounds convey, that is important. And their meaning depends upon what is within one—upon his point of view and his ability to understand.

We always interpret the new in terms of the old. We grasp the unknown only by relating it to the known; to *name* it even we must class it with some past experience. A little girl of three called to her mother in wonder to come and see how the flowers had *melted* in the heat of the sun. A bright boy of the same age called a ring-shaped ant-hill a *doughnut,* and put a young uncle to confusion by asking whether his budding mustache were an *eyebrow.* We have all heard many such sayings of children, and are often amused at their brightness and originality. They are but simple illustrations of one of the

most fundamental of all laws of the mind—that new ideas grow always out of the old, and that what we already know biases our interest in novel situations and our comprehension of their meaning.

The term **apperception** is applied to this process of getting meanings. It is the process of interpreting, comprehending, digesting and assimilating whatever presents itself to the mind. It is the source of many of the teacher's hardest problems. If we could just put our own ideas unchanged into a pupil's head, teaching would be a very simple thing. But that we cannot do. We can only present words and things, and the pupil must understand them in his own way and from them construct his own ideas. What meaning does he get? What ideas does he form?—these are the vital questions in every day's work.

**The law of apperception** is that *the meaning of each new experience is determined by the relations it bears to one's ideas, instincts and habits.* In early childhood, we have seen, things are apperceived from the standpoint of use and action. The child's *instincts* in the main determine his attitudes toward what is presented to him, and hence its meaning. But as experience grows, and *ideas* and *habits* multiply, they come to serve more and more as the basis for his apperceptions.

To understand, therefore, what your pupil's experience has been, what ideas and habits he has acquired, and so, what point of view he will bring to your teaching, is your primary duty. He will interpret everything you say and do from the plane of his own experience. If you can talk with him upon that same plane, and express your ideas in terms that belong to it, you can be reasonably sure that he will get just the meaning you want him to get. If you cannot, he will get some meaning or other, but not what you intend.

It is especially difficult to share the point of view of children from six to eight, and to make sure that we understand their apperceptions. Younger children are more dominated by instinct, and so tend to look at things in the same general way. Older children are nearer to our own plane, and reading has thrown open to them the common heritage of the race. Middle childhood is a transition time—from home to school, from play to work, from instinct to will, from imagination to reason. Each child is working out his own ideas from the host of new experiences that are coming to him, and he is bound to get some that are strange enough from our standpoint.

We must be careful not to assume that the child knows things which he really does not. A number of investigations have revealed a some-

what surprising ignorance of common things among children who are entering school. At Boston, of two hundred children entering school in the fall of 1880, President Hall found that 60 per cent did not know a robin, and 91 per cent an elm tree; 54 per cent had never seen a sheep; 50 per cent did not know what butter is made of, and 20 per cent were ignorant that milk comes from cows; 78 per cent did not know what dew is; 90 per cent could not locate their ribs, 81 per cent their lungs, 70 per cent their wrists, 65 per cent ankles, and 25 per cent elbows; 21 per cent did not know the difference between their right and left hands; 28 per cent did not know what a hill is, and 35 per cent had never been in the country. Speaking to the public school teacher, President Hall draws these conclusions among others: (1) "There is next to nothing of pedagogic value, the knowledge of which it is safe to assume at the outset of school life." (2) "Every teacher on starting with a new class or in a new locality, to make sure that his efforts along some lines are not utterly lost, should undertake to explore carefully, section by section, children's minds with all the tact and ingenuity he can command and acquire, to determine exactly what is already known." *

Such a detailed investigation of the pupil's ideas, of course, cannot be undertaken by the Sunday school teacher; yet the spirit of these two conclusions should possess us. And our task is really very much simpler in this regard than that of the teacher in the public schools, just because we can count on the ideas which the child gets from him. *There is one very definite and practical way for you to get into touch with the child's apperceptions. Visit his grade in the public schools; find out what he is learning there; and bring your teaching into as close correlation with it as you can.*

4. **The imagination of middle childhood** is no less active, but more coherent and better controlled than that of early childhood. We have just seen that imaginative play reaches its culmination in this period. The same is true of the appetite for stories.

(1) The child is as eager as ever for *stories*. They must have more of detail and of connected action than those which appealed to him when younger. They must be dramatic, with plenty of life and movement, yet with a unity and coherence that brings them nearer to the plane of reality.

> "Here is opportunity to fill the mind with a stock of images that shall represent life in its truth. The stories should not be

* Hall: "Aspects of Child Life and Education," ch. i.

goody-goody, nor should they contain any effort to reveal spiritual ideas and motives that are beyond the child's spontaneous interest. What is needed is the truth of life embodied in simple, sensuous forms, especially forms of outward action."*

(2) The child now makes a *distinction between fact and fancy*. His imagination is becoming critical. All stories were alike to the credulity of early childhood. But now he is getting perspective. He recognizes a difference between stories that are "just stories" and those that are "really true" or "could happen." Some that he once implicitly believed are now called into question. He wants to know whether fairy tales are true, or whether Santa Claus is real.

5. The fact is that **reason is awakening.** The child is beginning to grasp the relations of things and to fit them together into a connected whole.

Only the tiny baby accepts the moments as they come, without question of whence or whither, how or why. As soon as the mind awakens, the little child seeks causes for the happenings that fill his days. He finds them, we have seen, in personal agencies. He interprets all nature after the pattern of himself, and peoples his world with fairies and elves.

Almost insensibly, however, he grows away from this conception. As day after day brings more experience, the regularity and continuity of natural events stand out ever more plainly. Time and again, the same two things are joined together. When the one happens, the other follows. He comes soon to look upon the one as the cause of the other—and then there is no more need of fairies or giants. He has come to see that things cause one another. Henceforth he seeks thing-causes.

The transition is not made all at once. It is pretty sure to center, however, in middle childhood. With the influx of new ideas at school and the freedom of a wider companionship, the child soon outgrows the myths of his earlier years and reaches out toward a more rational comprehension of the world about him. It is a time of eager mental activity and of endless questions. The child is *putting his world together*. It is a work of thought, not merely of the senses. He is learning the relations of things to one another, and is as eager as he had been to see and touch in the first place.

We are apt to make either of two mistakes in dealing with the child at this time. One is *to demand too much of him*, assuming a reason-

* Coe: "Education in Religion and Morals," p. 232.

ing power which he has not yet attained. He reasons only in terms of sequence. He associates cause and effect, not because he sees the real ground of their relationship, but simply because they happen together in time and space. He cannot analyze such a relationship into its elements and discriminate the essential from the non-essential. He cannot reason abstractly, and is not at all certain to draw a logical conclusion from given premises. All this must wait until adolescence, for reason is the last to mature of the intellectual powers.

The other mistake is *to fail to meet the demands which the child's reason makes upon us.* The most important of these demands are (1) consistency; (2) openness and sincerity.

(1) *Consistency* is demanded because the child is forming his own ideas of right and wrong. He forms them in the same way that he does his ideas of physical things—by reasoning from the sequence of events. Actions are bad, to his mind, which are followed by disagreeable results; those are good which bring pleasure. Moral laws are to him simple statements of cause and effect. He judges actions solely by their consequences. It is plain what is required of us. We must be firm and consistent in our dealings with him. We must abide by the simple laws we wish him to learn. There must be no exceptions, justified by some higher bit of reasoning that he cannot comprehend. We must see to it that always bad results follow bad actions, and good goes with good. In short, we must confront him with a moral order as inflexible as is the physical order, that he may be able to formulate definite moral laws, and that obedience to law and respect for the right may grow naturally within him.

(2) *Openness and sincerity* are demanded in our answers to his questions. The mother who will not answer truthfully a child's doubt concerning Santa Claus, because "it is so nice for the little ones to believe in him," sells her boy's birthright for a paltry bit of play. He believes her until the truth is forced upon him by the ridicule of schoolmates. She has deceived him, and left him to find out elsewhere and to suffer in the finding. Yet he ought to have the right to come to mother before anyone else in the world, for the truth and with the truth. There is a barrier now; his confidence is shaken—and then she grieves in later years that he does not come to her with his problems!

The teacher is faithless to his trust who teaches a child to accept as literal truth any Bible story or figure that he does not himself accept in that way, because "children are not old enough to be bothered with such things." Some day the youth so taught will pass through

an agony of doubt; and it may mean the shipwreck of a soul.

We need to remember that the child now has *both* imagination and reason, and that he will continue throughout life to need both. We must recognize the distinction that he draws between "just stories" and "things that really happened." We must minister both to the story-appetite and to the hunger for facts. And—most important of all—we must show him that there is a vast middle ground between mere fancy on the one hand and the plain recital of fact on the other; the middle ground of *truth presented under the forms of the imagination.* "Faust," "Macbeth," "Enoch Arden," "The Idylls of the King"—who cares whether the events they tell ever happened in just that way? These tell more than facts; they feed the soul upon *truth.* Literature is more than history; it is a seer's vision of truth set down in pictures that we too may see. The Bible is more than a chronicle of events; it is a divinely inspired interpretation of history, a book of life and truth.

No distinction that life will bring is more important than this threefold one: literal fact, imaginative truth and mere fancy. And now, when the distinction begins to be made, is the time to shape it if we would have the boy become what he ought to be—a man of perfect fidelity to fact on the one hand, and of whole-souled appreciation of literature and art on the other, discriminating in both the true from the idle and the false. Give both the truth and the story of Santa, therefore, the myths of the Greeks and Norsemen as well as primary lessons in science, the fact with the figure in the Bible story. Do not be afraid to answer when a child asks whether a story ever happened, "No, it never happened; but don't you think it tells us something true?"—and show him just what you mean.

The child is not ready, of course, to receive the whole truth on every subject—in fact, not on any. But that is not necessary. To hold something back is not to evade or deceive. We need give only so much as his spontaneous interests demand; and that must be in a form that he can understand.

Children's questions about birth and sex constitute a special problem, and one peculiarly grave. The parent who evades them condemns his boy to find out from companions in ways that are full of impure suggestion. Frankly and plainly, without preaching and without mystery, these questions should be answered with the simple and literal truth—never going beyond the child's spontaneous interest, but satisfying it completely. They are not for the teacher to answer, however. It is the sacred duty of the father and mother.

**6. The child of this age is still self-centered** and must be dealt with individually. He likes to be with other children, but the competitive motive is strong and he has no idea of subordinating self to the good of the group. The real awakening of the social instincts comes afterward, in later childhood.

**The instinct of imitation,** however, leads the child out in a measure beyond himself. He now imitates the *doer* rather than the deed. Instead of copying single actions, he wants to be like the *person* behind the action. He begins to think of what he would like to be when grown up, and his choice is always the reflection of what those nearest to him are—father, mother, friend or teacher. Your influence is never greater than right now.

## QUESTIONS

1. Where shall we place the transition from early to middle childhood? Why?

2. Describe the physical growth and health of this period.

3. How does the play of middle childhood differ from that of early childhood?

4. What is the process of apperception? State the law of apperception. What problem does the process of apperception set the teacher?

5. Why are the apperceptions of middle childhood especially hard to understand?

6. How may the Sunday school teacher best make sure that he understands the ideas of Primary children?

7. How does the imagination of middle childhood differ from that of early childhood?

8. What proofs are there that the child's reason is now awakening?

9. What is meant by the statement that the child reasons only in terms of sequence?

10. Why ought we be consistent in our dealings with children?

11. How ought we meet a child's questions in search of the truth? Give all the reasons you can for your answer.

12. How does the individualism of middle childhood differ from that of early childhood? Its imitation?

## LESSON V

### Later Childhood

Life is unique in the years from nine to thirteen. The boy and girl are unlike the children that were, or the youth and maid that will be. Later childhood has as distinctive characteristics as adolescence. "Health is almost at its best, activity is greater and more varied than it ever was before or ever will be again, and there is peculiar endurance, vitality and resistance to fatigue. . . Perception is very acute, and there is great immunity to exposure, danger, accident, as well as to temptation." *

Yet it is hard to say exactly where the period begins. The average child enters it *when he begins to read easily and naturally;* and it will be best for our purpose to let this mark the transition. When a child can understand and enjoy books for himself, life acquires a new range. The whole wide world of literature lies open before him, and he plunges into it with a mind as eager as ever his senses had been to make acquaintance with the material world.

1. **This is a period of slow growth, of health and hardihood.** The first marked difference between the sexes appears, girls being quicker to develop than boys. The tenth year in girls and the eleventh in boys are years of very slow growth. In both sexes, this retardation is followed by an acceleration which heralds the coming of adolescence. Since this acceleration begins a year or more earlier in girls, they are apt to be taller and heavier than boys at the close of this period and the beginning of the next. During the three years from nine to twelve, a boy increases in weight 29 per cent and in height less than 11 per cent—a less rapid growth than that of middle childhood. Girls increase in weight 37 per cent and in height 13 per cent.

In both sexes, it is a time of good health and of boundless energy. Dr. Hartwell's tables, compiled from a careful study of Boston children in the census years 1875, 1885 and 1890, show that the power to resist disease is highest in the twelfth year for girls and in the thirteenth year for boys.†

* Hall: "Youth: Its Education, Regimen and Hygiene," p. 1.

† Hartwell: Report of Director of Physical Training, 1894, School Document No. 8, Boston, Mass., cited in Tyler: "Growth and Education," p. 269

In the year 1907, throughout the registration area which contains nearly one-half the population of the United States, there were 10,513 deaths of children from ten to fourteen, against 15,287 from five to nine, 18,359 from fifteen to nineteen, 27,876 from twenty to twenty-four and 29,415 from twenty-five to thirty. There were over one hundred and eighty thousand deaths of children under five; and in each of the remaining five-year periods up to eighty there were more than thirty thousand.*

2. **Independence and self-assertion** are, to fond mothers especially, the most obvious characteristics of the period. "The child develops a life of its own outside the home circle, and its natural interests are never so independent of adult influence." † And now certainly, if at no other time, *the boy's interests reflect the activities of a more primitive generation.* Fighting, hunting, fishing, exploring, collecting, go to make up his life. He is more likely to play truant or to run away than at any other period. He is full of daring and adventure, of dash and go. He cares no longer for imaginative play or for fairy stories. He is frank and practical, and has, he feels, put away childish things.

3. But there is another side. With all its independence and self-assertion, its primitive instincts and love of adventure, later childhood is amenable to law. Its "gang spirit" and its "hero-worship" mark a distinct advance in moral development.

The child's **social instincts** begin to ripen in this period; and obedience to law becomes to him a matter of social well-being resting upon his own initiative, rather than of mere habit or imitation or authority.

(1) *The sexes now draw apart.* Boys and girls no longer share the same interests, or enjoy the same games. Boys get a wholesome contempt for the gentler sex; and girls can see nothing nice in such rude and messy creatures as boys have gotten to be. In the latter half of this period, and in the first few years of adolescence, girls are more mature than boys of the same age. They develop more quickly, not only in body, but in mind. A high school principal expressed the difference in a striking, though somewhat extreme way, by saying that the average boy in the senior class of a high school is little more mature than the average girl in the freshman class of the same school.

(2) *Social motives predominate in the games* of the period, which are almost wholly *competitive.* Some are games in which individual competes with individual, each striving for his own success and glory.

* United States Census, Mortality Statistics for 1907, p. 282.

† Hall "Youth: Its Education Regimen and Hygiene," p. 8

But more and more the boy becomes interested in games that call for *team-play* rather than for individual prowess. He begins to like baseball, basketball, hockey and the like, and even tries football. In these, the best player is he who can fit best into a system of play, and work most unselfishly for the success of the team as a whole, instead of seeking to shine individually.

(3) Team games call for *organization;* yet even aside from them, the "*gang instinct*," as it has been called, is at work. Boys and girls of this age naturally and spontaneously organize themselves into informal groups—the boys into "gangs" and the girls into "crowds"—and into more or less formal clubs.

Dr. Sheldon's study of such spontaneously organized clubs gives some very definite information concerning boyhood and girlhood. Of over a thousand boys from ten to sixteen who answered his inquiries, 851 belonged to organizations of this sort. Of the remainder, many were in clubs formed for them by adults, and some were thrown with other boys so little that they had no chance. Eight hundred and sixty-two societies were reported, and 623 fully described. Of these, 1½ per cent were philanthropic, 3½ per cent secret, 4¼ per cent social (for "good times"), 4¼ per cent devoted to literature, music or art, 8½ per cent industrial, 17 per cent predatory (for exploring, building, hunting, fighting, preying), and 61 per cent athletic. It will be noted that physical activity is the keynote of by far the larger number—86½ per cent if we add the industrial to the predatory and athletic clubs.

The figures for the ages at which these clubs are formed are as follows: at eight, 28; at nine, 44; at ten, 118; at eleven, 155; at twelve, 164; at thirteen, 188; at fourteen, 90; at fifteen, 80; at sixteen, 34; at seventeen, 11. We note that the ages at which the most societies are formed are eleven, twelve and thirteen. Over 87 per cent are formed between ten and fifteen, less than eight per cent before ten, and only 1 per cent at seventeen. The interests, too, change with age. Predatory societies are at their height at eleven, and then gradually disappear. Athletic societies multiply rapidly until thirteen, then diminish in number. The interest in literary societies grows steadily, though never very great.

Girls and boys naturally organize in separation from one another. Girls form five times as many social societies as boys, twice as many philanthropic, and three times as many secret, industrial and literary. On the other hand, boys form four times as many predatory and seven times as many athletic societies as the girls—these two classes forming but 10 per cent of the girls' societies as opposed to 78 per cent of the

boys. "Girls are more nearly governed by adult motives than boys. They organize to promote sociability, to advance their interests, to improve themselves and others. Boys are nearly primitive man: they associate to hunt, fish, roam, fight and to contest physical superiority with each other." *

(4) With this awakening of the social instincts, and their expression in spontaneous organizations, there comes into the child's life *a new moral force*—that of *the opinion of his peers*. He has entered into a social order of his own, and its laws become his standards of right and wrong. He no longer imitates parents and teachers, but his own companions, or the one whom the gang holds a hero. He cares little for the opinion of older people, but a great deal for what the "bunch" thinks.

> "It is probably from the gang that most boys learn first to codify their conduct, and while this code of honor is imperfect, it is apt to be pretty sound. This list of 'things a feller won't do' soon becomes a mighty judgment of the individual conscience. . . . Parents may have slaved a life long; they may have made the inculcation of morals a daily care; these new companions have been known only six days, but they are Public Opinion." †

This applies also to girls. In this period boys and girls alike begin, through association with their own comrades, to achieve moral independence.

(5) *A strong sense of honor* is characteristic. A boy's fundamental virtue is loyalty. He will stick by the rest of the fellows through thick and thin. And from this loyalty springs a fine sense of what is honorable and true and just. His boyish conceptions of these things are often enough distorted; but they are virtues none the less, and virtues really his own. If you respect his loyalty and rely upon his honor, God gives you quick entrance to the soul of a boy. But there is no greater sin than to trample upon his ideals and outrage his sense of justice. And there is no better proof of the worth of a man than to have a boy think him "square." Judge Lindsey has been saving hundreds of the street boys of Denver from crime, and turning them toward worthy lives, simply because he is willing to take "a kid's word."

* Sheldon: "The Institutional Activities of American Children," American Journal of Psychology, Vol. IX., 425-448. This chapter uses Forbush's summary of his figures, in "The Boy Problem."

† Forbush: "The Boy Problem," pp. 20, 21.

It is hard to pick out crucial points in the education of a child, for everything is important, and moments may be decisive that we least expect. Yet here, certainly, we cannot be too careful. To the end of one's days his loyalties make his life. Ask what they are, and you know what the man is. Is he loyal at all? If not, he is no man. Is he loyal only to a group—to his own family merely, to a political party, or to a particular denomination? Or is he loyal to humanity and to God, and to the great eternal principles of right and truth which lie beyond all narrowness and party strife? These questions have been settled for many a man by the attitude of elders to his boyish loyalties.

All this applies particularly, of course, to boys. You cannot, even in speaking of them, mix the sexes at this age. Yet it is as true of girls, with the difference of perspective that is cast by the different social life into which they now begin to enter. Every mother knows well that a daughter now begins to have "ideas of her own," which it is idle to seek to repress or to expel by force. The wise mother is she who respects the daughter's personality, invites her confidence and seeks to share her point of view, and so by companionship, rather than by domination, leads her into clear-sighted, self-reliant womanhood.

4. This is the period of **life's first idealism.** Boys and girls now begin to form ideals for themselves.

These first ideals are concrete. They are found always in some person. Later childhood has well been called **the age of hero-worship.** Middle childhood imitates persons, but not as ideals; adolescence conceives ideals, but not in personal terms. Now, ideal and person are inseparable. The boy worships his hero because he sees in him the embodiment of an inward longing of his own; and he loves strength and courage, manliness and truth, not in and for themselves, but for what they actually accomplish in the person of one about whom achievement casts its glamor. You cannot help a boy or girl of this age by talking of ideals in general and in the abstract. You must set before them a hero.

But that is not easy. Heroes are not made to order, or worshiped according to precept. Boys especially seem apt enough to idealize wrong characters, and perversely fail to be attracted by the heroes we would press upon them. Earlier in life, the child had imitated those whom he knew best—father, mother or teacher. Then their word was law, and to be like them his dearest wish. But that time is passing. Life is reaching beyond home and school. Its heroes come

from the new worlds just opening to the vision of boyhood and girlhood. They must be in some degree removed from the ordinary round of humdrum and familiar things. They must have something of that mystery which always surrounds an object of worship. Boys are more apt to get their heroes from the world about them, girls from their reading, from history or fiction. Boys always idealize men, while girls may choose either men or women.

It is *achievement* that makes a hero. Men who can do things well, men who can get results, men who *can* in anything, are the boy's heroes just as they are ours. Because his instincts and interests are primitive, he is most ready to idealize physical strength or skill or daring. He will worship the leader of the gang, the football captain or the star pitcher, the town's best hunter or fisherman. But it is only because he is not yet able to realize achievements of a different sort. As fast as he becomes able to comprehend the work of Edison, of Lincoln, of Luther, he is ready to pay tribute to strength of intellect and heart and will.

The counsel is simple but hard to live up to. If you would be a hero to the boys of your class—and you must be if you are really to influence them as you should—you need only *succeed* in what you do before them. It may be that you are able to approach them from the physical side, and are fortunate enough to win them because of your athletic prowess. But that is not always essential, and that alone is never enough. The one thing needful is that you be absolute master of yourself and your work. Teach well, live strongly, do things, get results, and you will have the influence you wish. Heroism, like the kingdom of God, "cometh not with observation." He soonest becomes a hero who thinks least of it, but most of the things he is set to do.

The principle tells us, too, how to present Jesus to our pupils. It must be as a hero, in the sheer strength of His manhood and His achievements. Talk of what He *did*, not of what He was. At this age, children will not love Him for His goodness, but they will learn to love goodness because they honor Him and His deeds. Do not talk much, however, about His being a hero; and certainly do not ask your pupils to call Him one. There are some things in life that cannot stand much talking about—heroism and loyalty are among them. Simply present His life and its deeds so vividly and concretely that the strength and power of His personality cannot help but shine through.

5. At no time of life is there a greater **hunger for books and**

**reading** than now. Most of us can remember how eagerly we awaited the weekly arrival of the *Youth's Companion*, or how we pored over Henty and Alger and Oliver Optic. What woman can forget her girlhood's delight in Louisa Alcott and the Elsie books?

The teacher could ask for no better opportunity than is afforded by this insatiable demand of later childhood for something to read. And it is, like all times of opportunity, a critical point in the development of personality. The boy may easily acquire a taste for the "dime novel" of impossible adventure and hair-breadth escape, the girl for mawkish romance; and they grow into the man or woman who can enjoy nothing but highly-spiced and frothy fiction. On the other hand, children who are given books too serious may lose entirely the desire to read, and become those pitiable beings—men who never read, except the newspaper, and women whose only literature is in the oral form of gossip. Give a boy "goody-goody" books—the typical Sunday school library books of a few years ago—and you may turn him, not only against reading, but against religion itself.

We make a mistake if we treat the child's reading either as a mere amusement or as a sugar-coat for a moral. To the end of life, the love of good literature remains one of its mightiest spiritual forces. The child must learn to love the best. It is as important that you guide him to great fiction and poetry, to well-written biography and history as that you teach him Bible verses. It is better to co-operate with the town library than to attempt to provide a Sunday school library, because of the wider resources the public institution is apt to afford. It is your privilege to put your pupil in touch with the literary heritage of the race. Pick things that he can comprehend; but do not be afraid of the best. "Periods which no master has described, whose spirit no poet breathes," says Herbart, "are of little value to education." Books of real insight into life and of genuine literary value, books of truth caught by the imagination and felt within, will grip the minds and hearts of children as they do our own.

6. **Habits** are more easily formed in this period than at any other time of life, and are more lasting. A multitude of brain cells are just maturing. Impressions are easy, and connections between cells quickly established. Every boy knows that if he is ever to become a great baseball player he must begin now. Later he will not be plastic enough to get the finer knack of the man who "handles himself as if he were born to it."

It follows that **memory** is best in these years, for memory, as we

shall see, is after all a kind of habit. It is the time for drill work in school. Repetition will now fix anything in the mind, whether it be understood or not, and many a glib answer will deceive us into thinking that the pupil has really grasped our teaching. The boy will learn his daily lessons word for word with only a couple of readings, keep them until the recitation is over and then let them go forever. If he is ever to learn a foreign language, better now than later, for he will soon be able to use it easily and naturally, while there will always be some little hesitancy or artificiality about the speech that he learns in later years. This is the time to learn Bible verses, the shorter psalms, and whatever else should be laid up in the mind word for word. If you keep these tasks within reason, you need hardly fear repelling your pupil. Most boys and girls delight in them because they are so easy.

7. We shall see in the next chapter that there is a marked **awakening of interest in religion** at the end of this period and the beginning of early adolescence. The child is approaching life's decision time. We must keep this in mind throughout these years. We shall not attempt to hasten it: but we shall make ready. And if the child of eleven or twelve wants to make a public profession of his love for his Father and the Lord Jesus, we shall let him join the church. Happy the little one who has been so brought up that he has never known himself to be anything other than a child of God.

## QUESTIONS

1. When does the average child make the transition from middle to later childhood?

2. Describe the growth and health of later childhood.

3. In what sense is it true that boys of this age are like primitive man?

4. How do the games of later childhood show that the social instincts are ripening?

5. What is the attitude of the sexes toward one another in this period?

6. What do you understand by the "gang instinct"? Tell something of Dr. Sheldon's study of clubs organized by boys and girls.

7. Show how public opinion enters life as a moral force during later childhood.

8. How should the teacher deal with "school-boy honor"?

9. Describe the hero-worship of later childhood. Can you remember any such hero-worship of your own? Tell something of it.

10. What opportunity does the "reading craze" of later childhood afford the teacher? What dangers does it involve?

11. What is meant by the statement that the nervous system is more plastic in later childhood than in any other time of life? What evidence is there for it?

12. When is a child's first definite awakening of interest in religion apt to occur? Is a child of eleven or twelve too young to be confirmed?

## LESSON VI

### Early Adolescence

There is a world of difference between twelve and thirteen, in the mind of boys and girls. They are all glad to enter upon the 'teens. It seems to mark a great step toward that goal of every child's ambition—being grown-up.

And they are not far wrong. The passage from childhood to adolescence is in fact life's greatest and most definite natural transition. Rooted in the development of new physical powers, it transforms the mental and spiritual life as well. It has been well called a new birth. It is the awakening of manhood and womanhood.

1. **The term adolescence** is applied to the whole period from this first awakening of new powers to their final ripening into young manhood and womanhood. Its boundaries cannot be exactly fixed. The age of puberty varies with different individuals, and is earlier for girls than for boys. It comes generally at thirteen or fourteen. The end of adolescence and the beginning of manhood and womanhood depends a great deal upon circumstances. The boy who must leave school early to go to work, the girl who must assume the responsibilities of a household, mature quickly. The complexity of modern life, on the other hand, and the elaborate education it demands, have lengthened adolescence. The end of the period comes more often at twenty-four or twenty-five than at twenty-one, which is the age recognized by law.

For our purpose, however, it will be best to regard the thirteenth birthday as the beginning of adolescence, and the twenty-first as its end—simply because the Sunday school had best recognize those transitions which are definitely acknowledged as such by the pupil himself. No boy or girl in the 'teens likes to be classed with the children; and the young man or woman of twenty-one feels a right to all that the attainment of legal majority implies.

This period, again, may be divided at the seventeenth birthday. *Early adolescence* thus covers four years, ages thirteen to sixteen; and *later adolescence*, four years, ages seventeen to twenty.

2. **Physically,** early adolescence is a time of *very rapid growth*, both in height and weight. During the three years from the twelfth

birthday to the fifteenth, boys increase in weight 40 per cent and in height 14 per cent, while girls increase in weight 36 per cent and in height 10 per cent. At fifteen a boy has attained 92 per cent of his adult height and 76 per cent of his adult weight; girls have reached in height 97 per cent and in weight 90 per cent of their full growth. After seventeen girls almost cease to grow, and boys grow comparatively little, that mainly in weight.

The years of most rapid growth in height are the twelfth and thirteenth for girls, and the fourteenth and fifteenth for boys. In weight, girls grow most rapidly from the twelfth to the fifteenth years, boys from the thirteenth to the seventeenth. Girls are taller than boys from the twelfth to the fifteenth years, and heavier from the thirteenth to the fifteenth. After fifteen boys exceed both in height and weight. The most profound changes of these years, of course, are those connected with the development of the powers of sex.

This is a time of *vigor and energy*. While there is an increase in liability to sickness just before puberty, this declines again immediately after; and the power to resist disease remains high throughout the period. During just those years, in fact, when boys and girls approaching puberty are most apt to be sickly, they are least likely to die. In the last chapter we saw that the period from the tenth to the fifteenth birthday contains less deaths than any other five-year period. According to the census of 1900, the death rate for the registration area of the United States was 3.3 per thousand for the period from ten to fourteen, against 5.2 from five to nine, 5.2 from fifteen to nineteen, and 7.5 from twenty to twenty-four, with increasing rates for each succeeding period. Hartwell's tables, previously referred to, give a death-rate of 4.5 from ten to fourteen, opposed to 10.6 from five to nine, and 7.9 from fifteen to nineteen. For our own division into periods, his tables give the following death rates: middle childhood, 10.2; later childhood, 4.7; early adolescence, 5.5; later adolescence, 9.0.

3. **Early adolescence is a time of expansion.** Life widens in a hundred unexpected ways, and may take any one of them as its final direction. It is full of conflicting impulses, of contradictions and surprises. Through all, however, three fundamental characteristics stand out definitely: the expansion of selfhood, a new recognition of social values, and an emotional instability associated with the development of the sexual instincts.

4. **The expansion of selfhood.** It is now that the boy really begins to attain selfhood. He enters into the heritage of instincts and ideals, purposes and ambitions which is his birthright as a member of

the human race. He is filled with a new sense of power, and with a desire to use it as a man should. He becomes conscious of what the world is doing, and begins to realize its worth. He is eager to throw his energies into the real things of life and to do what there lies waiting for him.

A time of *independence and self-assertion*, then—but independence and self-assertion of a totally different sort from that of later childhood. Then the boy was independent because his interests were primitive; he was absorbed in the social life of the gang, and blind to the greater world beyond. Now it is the independence of vision, the self-assertion of one who has caught a glimpse of the great interests of humanity, and who feels his right to give and get, on his own account, as a sharer of the big world's life. The man is stirring within the boy, and it is a man's independence that he begins to assert. He has lived through the primitive interests of a former generation, and now claims his share of to-day. He is one of us.

This expansion of selfhood reveals itself in the *desire to go to work*, which every boy feels at this age. It is hard now to keep boys at school. They feel that they ought to be getting at a trade or beginning their business career, and that it is time they were making money. Recent studies show that the tendency to drop out of school is greatest within the period covered by the last two grades of the elementary school and the first two years of the high school.* Out of more than two thousand children answering a question as to what they would do with a small monthly allowance, it was found that over 80 per cent of those thirteen or more said that they would save it, against 40 per cent at seven and eight, and about 60 per cent from nine to twelve.†

*Early adolescence is genuinely and passionately idealistic.* The boy is no longer a mere imitator; he is more than a hero worshiper. His version penetrates the outward act, and catches the spirit within a man. He begins to discern inward qualities, and to feel the intrinsic worth of truth, faith, self-sacrifice. And it is not simply that he admires these virtues in others; he feels them to be a forthputting of his own deeper self. They are directions in which his life would expand, forms in which his self would find expression.

The power to conceive abstract ideals is man's crowning glory and strength. It lifts him above mere intelligence and brings him into cooperation with God Himself. But it can become a pitiable weakness.

* Thorndike: "The Elimination of Pupils from School." Ayres: "Laggards in Our Schools."

† Monroe: "Money Sense in Children." Cited in Hall: "Adolescence," II., p. 393.

for it makes possible a life of contemplation and dreams, whose remote devotion to transcendent things never realizes itself in action, and fails to redeem from sordidness the present deed. So the awakening of this power marks a critical time in the life of the youth. The divine moves within him. He glimpses the things of the Spirit; he feels the "torment of the infinite." He lives for that which is not yet real. He builds upon "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." He is full of ambitions; he makes decisions; he seeks service. It is life's very spring time. But he must be carefully dealt with. His ideals are yet evanescent; his decisions not abiding. He resolves things too great, and turns back in disappointment from the plodding path. He may easily enough become a dreamer and a scatter-brain—a *mere* idealist. He needs the friendship of one who is older, but who has not forgotten what it is to be a boy—one who can, through comprehending sympathy and co-operation, help him find himself and turn his life toward its real usefulness.

5. **The social instincts** now mature rapidly, and there is a definite recognition of social values. The independence of adolescence is tempered by a new sense of social dependence and by the desire to be recognized by others, to help and to be helped by them.

The social forms of later childhood persist in the first year or two of this period, but are gradually outgrown. We saw that the gang instinct, as witnessed by the number of clubs organized, is strongest at thirteen, and then declines. It is not that the youth becomes less social; rather that he is becoming conscious of a larger world. The opinion of his fellows remains a powerful moral force, as it does to the end of life; yet now he begins to recognize the wider bearings of his actions, and to look for judgment beyond his immediate companions. Later childhood had thought that it possessed reality when it lived to itself; adolescence now sees that reality is richer far than childhood had dreamed.

*Life now first becomes genuinely altruistic.* The youth is glad, in pursuit of his ideals and for the sake of others, to endure hardships and to make sacrifices. He wants to be more than square; he feels the worth of unselfishness. It follows that here, too, selfishness begins. The child who is a mere bundle of instincts, the boy who has not yet felt an altruistic impulse, may be self-centered, but not selfish. But the youth who feels the call to a bit of sacrifice, and rejects it, lets an unworthy thing enter his life. Genuine selfishness exists only when the higher impulse is present, but is denied. It is in adolescence, as a matter of fact, that real sin begins—the conscious choice of a worse, as opposed to a better way.

6. **The development of the sexual instincts** underlies every other change at adolescence. It strengthens youth's aspirations, and colors its social attitudes Altruism and self-sacrifice are primarily, in fact parental instincts.

New impulses, new sensations and emotions new temptations, new problems, new meanings, a new conscience and a new heart—from without and within, the whole world and himself seem alike strange and wonderful to the adolescent who first feels the race-old forces by which life begets life. It is a time of unstable equilibrium, of strong yet shifting emotions, of purposes not understood. "Someone has said of mental adolescence that it is as if we were born over again, not from an unremembered past into which the new life can bring no surprises, but from one conscious life into another that cannot be understood by anything in our previous experience" *

In the first years of the period, the sex-repulsion continues which was characteristic of later childhood; but the sexes begin to be attracted in its latter half. Boys begin to pay attention to their dress, and girls are no longer tom-boys. Few pass the age of sixteen without some little love affair.

From sixteen to eighteen the feelings deepen and acquire more stability. Emotions become sentiments; the affections are more lasting. Life is getting its "set." It is the time at which emotional religious conversions are most apt to occur.

7. **Intellectually,** adolescence is marked by the development of the higher powers. The youth is able to *reason*, not simply in terms of time sequence, but of cause and effect, and logical ground and consequence. And he becomes a pretty rigorous logician. He wants to *understand.* He seeks life's rational basis.

It follows that the adolescent is *critical.* He rejects mere authority. The springs of moral judgment are now within him; he will accept no bald imperatives. He is no longer credulous; he demands proofs. He is not content with scattered bits of knowledge; he wants to see things in their relations.

It is easy to see, therefore, why doubt should often be thought to be a characteristic of early adolescence. The sort of doubt that denies, however, is not natural at this period. It comes afterward, in later adolescence. Now there is simply the demand for reasons. If it turns to a more negative attitude, it is generally because we have not met that demand the right way. Clear, logical statement of beliefs and reasons will be accepted. But we can force the youth to doubt if we

* Coe: "The Spiritual Life," p. 33.

press authority where he seeks reason, or if, in matter or method, our teaching is below his level.

8. **Early adolescence is a time of more or less turmoil and confusion.** Coe calls it a period of "general mental fermentation," and speaks of its "yeastiness of mind." * There is not disorganization, so much as lack of organization. The youth does not understand himself; he cannot at once coordinate the many new impulses that are welling up within him.

Physically, the boy or girl in the early 'teens is overgrown and awkward. The parts of the body do not grow at the same rate, and there is clumsiness and incoordination of movement. The boy's voice breaks. The girl feels big and restless and is afraid to talk. Both are very sensitive, and are too often made more so by the talk of parents and family, who speak of the awkward age, comment on their personal appearance, or tease them about their budding consciousness of the other sex.

The extremes and contradictions of adolescence have often been noted. The boy is now one thing, and now its opposite. He suddenly awakes to a new interest, and throws himself into it with the utmost ardor—for a few weeks; then it is forgotten. He is over-exact and conscientious in some respects, and careless in others. It is because of the very richness of his new life. He is not sure of himself. His instincts are as great a surprise to himself as to anyone else.

This confusion of life may issue in an abnormal self-consciousness and a morbid habit of introspection. It then becomes hard to deal with because the adolescent is naturally secretive, and resents any intrusion upon his personality. It may be questioned whether most of the studies of adolescence have not tended to exaggerate the introspective character of the period. In any case, the cure is to give the youth something to do that seems to him worth while, and to see to it that he realizes something of its fruits.

9. **Religious awakenings** are natural in early adolescence. In the general expansion of selfhood the religious instinct has its place. As life opens to a larger world, and becomes cognizant of new social and spiritual values, the soul reaches out toward God.

As we should expect, the first definite awakening comes at the beginning of the period. At twelve or thirteen most children who have been brought up under religious influences desire to join the church. "Among 512 officers of Young Men's Christian Associations

* Coe: "The Spiritual Life," pp. 38, 86.

the average age of the first deep religious impression appears to have been 13.7 years. Among 99 men who were studied with reference to all their periods of special religious interest, as many awakenings of the religious sense occurred at twelve and thirteen as at sixteen and seventeen. A recent study shows that in a group of 'growth cases' reaching into the hundreds the most distinctive period of spontaneous interest falls at the age of twelve." *

There is a second period of religious awakening at sixteen and seventeen. Forty-one of the ninety-nine men studied by Coe experienced an increase of religious interest at this age—the same number as at the earlier period. At twenty again, there seems to be a third such awakening. Seventy-six per cent of the religious awakenings reported by these men came in the ages from twelve to twenty, and 50 per cent in the years named as times of special interest—twelve and thirteen, sixteen and seventeen, and twenty.† Other studies have tended to confirm the conclusions which Coe draws from these figures.

When we inquire into the *age of conversion*, the question is different. We are asking now at what age the decision is most apt to be made. As might be expected, Coe found that conversions were most frequent in the three periods of special religious awakening; but the proportion is not the same. There were more at sixteen and seventeen than in the earlier period, and many less in the last period than in either of the other two. Collating a number of studies, he found that the average age of conversion for 1784 men was 16.4 years. Hall adds data from several sources which show that, of a total of 4054 men, 1329 were converted at sixteen, seventeen and eighteen, and 3053 at ages from twelve to twenty, with only 705 at twenty-one and over.‡ Haslett summarizes a total of 6641 conversions of both sexes, of which 5054 were at ages from twelve to twenty, 1527 were at sixteen and seventeen, and only 1039 from twenty-one to thirty-four.§

We shall later inquire more closely into the significance of these figures. It is enough now that we see the tremendous importance of early adolescence in religious development. Both at its beginning and at its end life is especially open to religious influences. It is the age upon which the Sunday school must center its efforts.

10. We may sum up, finally, three great reasons why early adolescence is a peculiarly critical period:

* Coe: "Education in Religion and Morals," pp. 254, 255.
† Coe: "The Spiritual Life," ch. i.
‡ Hall: "Adolescence," II., p. 290.
§ Haslett: "Pedagogical Bible School," p. 165.

(1) *It brings a multitude of new instincts.* A new instinct means a new interest, a new opening of life. It means an unstable equilibrium —a new danger and a new opportunity. Character is never more plastic; habits form quickly.

(2) *The youth thinks himself a man, but is not.* His ideals and ambitions reach out into the great world; yet he is only a boy, and hardly more than a child. He is not old enough to decide for himself any of life's greater issues; but he wants to. To deal rightly with him you will need all your love and tact and hard common sense. You must bear responsibility, yet let him feel it. You must take him seriously, and not let him know your doubts. In short, you must think *with* him, not simply *for* him, and so lead him to right conclusions. You must share his life, and give him a share of yours.

(3) *The youth of this age is peculiarly open to suggestion.* His suggestibility is in fact as great as that of the child under six—but it is of a different sort. Early childhood was open to direct suggestion; it would believe and act upon whatever is told it. Now the suggestion must be *indirect.* The youth will resent a direct command or wish; but he is very sensitive to influence. The reason is plain. His new consciousness of the great world about him shapes his sense of values. He will esteem those things that he finds esteemed in what he gets to know of the grown-up world; he will reject what is there rejected. There is no time of life when social environment is so potent. The youth is bound to be like those about him—not merely because he imitates, but because their life is the source from which he imbibes his new ideas of what life is. To help him you must suggest, not in words but in deeds. Don't talk; *be* and *do.* Go about your business, live straight and get things accomplished, and your influence will do what advice never could. Be a friend of the boy, not a patron. Let him work *with you;* don't make him feel that you are working *for him.*

## QUESTIONS

1. What years does adolescence cover? Why does the Sunday school fix the beginning and end of the period where it does?

2. Describe the physical growth and vigor of early adolescence. How do girls differ from boys in growth and development during these years?

3. How does the independence and self-assertion of early adolescence differ from that of later childhood?

4. How do the records of the public schools prove the expansion of selfhood in early adolescence?

5. Show how the social instincts mature in these years. How do they differ from those of later childhood?

6. Why does the development of the sexual instincts throw life into unstable equilibrium? What changes of attitude toward the other sex does the adolescent pass through?

7. In what sense is early adolescence a time of doubt?

8. Why is the youth of this age awkward and self-conscious?

9. What are the three periods of special religious awakening found by Coe?

10. At what time of life do the greater number of conversions take place?

11. Why is early adolescence a peculiarly critical period?

12. Compare the suggestibility of youth with that of childhood.

## LESSON VII

### Later Adolescence

We have agreed to regard the seventeenth birthday as the beginning, and the twenty-first as the end of later adolescence. These boundaries are by no means exact. There are no rules by which the passage from early to later adolescence may be precisely defined. Yet in every life there is a more or less definite turning point around sixteen to eighteen. It may be some moral or emotional crisis; it may be conversion. Or it is the beginning work to support one's self, or leaving home to go to college. It may be nothing more than the attainment of full growth in height. To know, in any particular case, just *what* the turning point has been, is essential to any real understanding of the succeeding years.

We have seen, too, that adolescence ends more often at twenty-four or twenty-five than at twenty-one. Yet here practical considerations impel the Sunday school to regard the age of legal majority as the end of youth.

1. **The development of individuality** is the fundamental characteristic of this period. It has been well called a time of *selection* and *concentration*. Early adolescence was a time of expansion. It presented a wealth of possibilities. It spread the world before youth's eager vision. Its instincts pulled a hundred ways. Later adolescence begins to select from among life's possibilities and to concentrate its energies. Life begins to narrow, but to become deeper. The time of mere vision is over; choice must be made. And with choice comes individuality. Lives diverge. Each must have its own work; and each its own quality

2. **The difference between individuals** is thus the great fact of which we must take account in this period. At no time, of course, are pupils to be treated in the bunch. The individuality of the tiniest and most uninteresting must be respected. But now, of all times, individual interests are primary. Each pupil presents a separate problem in himself.

Many factors enter into the determination of individuality. There are differences of heredity and of home environment. There is the natural inborn variation of capacity and temperament. God makes

no one of His creatures or of His children exactly like any other. It is the provision by which His wisdom insures progress in the world. All these differences show themselves with especial definiteness in later adolescence. And they do so because they are called out by differences in external conditions. We do not all have the same opportunities. We cannot all get the same education, or do the same work. There we come to the bottom of the matter—it is because the lives of your pupils are now getting set toward *work*, and toward different lines of work, that you must deal with each in its own way.

Recent studies show that not more than half the children who enter our city schools finish the work of the grades, and that only one-tenth of them continue to the final year of the high school.* It has been estimated, again, that only ten per cent of those who take a high school course go to college or to a professional school. Consider what differences, simply from this standpoint, later adolescence presents. Our pupils divide themselves into at least three great classes

(1) Those who have gotten only an elementary education, or a part of one, and have gone to work at an early age. They are more mature than others in some ways, for they have had to face life's serious business. In other respects they are more immature. Their lives are circumscribed; their interests narrow. They cannot appreciate things that appeal strongly to those of more culture.

(2) Those who are now finishing high school, and entering upon work-a-day life.

(3) Those who are entering college or professional school. For these the period of adolescence will be prolonged. They will broaden and mature intellectually, yet lack development into manhood and womanhood until they finally face the world to make a living.

3. All three classes are experiencing in this period a **contact with reality** more direct and definite than at any former time of life. The first two are wage-earners; the former with a little experience, the latter just beginning. They face the realities of business life, with its routine, its competition and its uncompromising standards of efficiency. The college students are leaving home for the first time to enter upon a new life. Protected from economic necessity as it is, college life yet has its realities. It is a world to itself, but within it the student stands upon his own feet. He must make good in life with his fellows as well as in the eyes of the faculty.

We shall here consider later adolescence from the standpoint simply of the first two classes. Very few of you have to deal with college

* Ayres: "Laggards in Our Schools," p. 65

students. The problems of the student, moreover, are peculiarly his own, and must be solved by college men.

4. For most of our pupils, then, later adolescence marks a new stage in life because it brings their first wages. It is the time of **transition from economic dependence to self-support and independence.** At some time or other within these years, life's real responsibilities begin.

Nature has made ready for the transition. The youth of this age possesses a splendid equipment for work—a high degree of physical energy, strength and comparative maturity of intellect and vigor of will. The *physical energy*, that before was needed for growth, can now be turned into activity and the development of strength. This is the age when athletes develop—great baseball and football players, boxers and runners. They reach their best in the middle twenties. The baseball player of thirty is a "veteran," and we wonder whether he can stand the pace for another season. The runner has usually had to stop racing before that age. He no longer possesses the endurance that he had in the years just before and after twenty-one.

The *intellectual energy* of the period is just as great. Reason and will are maturing, and the mind is restlessly active. Much of the world's best work has been done by young men. The list of its great youths reaches into every sphere. Napoleon was a lieutenant at fifteen, and by study made himself the master that he was of the science of war. He was but twenty-four when he astonished the world at the siege of Toulon. Lafayette sailed to the help of the American colonies at nineteen. Byron published his first volume at seventeen; Bryant wrote "Thanatopsis" at the same age. Shelley had published romances and poems before he was eighteen, and at that age was expelled from Oxford for publishing a tract on "The Necessity of Atheism." Pascal discovered geometry for himself at twelve, and at sixteen wrote a treatise on conic sections. Savonarola passed his later youth in meditation upon the evils of his day; and at twenty-two decided the work of his life. At seventeen Leibniz wrote a thesis containing the germ of his philosophy, and at twenty was ready for a doctorate of laws. Descartes doubted all knowledge save mathematics while yet a stripling, and at twenty-three passed through the crisis which determined his whole future life and philosophy. At nineteen Schelling was writing upon the philosophy of Kant and Fichte, at twenty-two published his first great book, and at twenty-three was himself professor of philosophy at Jena. Michael Angelo was at work in the palace of the Medici at sixteen. Peter Cooper vowed at

eighteen that he would some day build a Cooper Institute. At the same age Spurgeon began his remarkable work as a preacher.

5. Yet later adolescence is not all success and happiness. It contains its disappointments. It has **new forces to tear life down** as well as to build it up.

It is almost inevitably a time of some *disillusionment.* The hopes of early youth were too extravagant, its ideals loved with a passion that did not see how plodding is the path to realization. The first contact with reality brings something of a shock, a sense of loss. The world is not nearly so responsive as the boy had dreamed, and ideals are not so easy of accomplishment. This making a living seems, after all, a sordid business, which knows no law save the survival of the fittest. He feels himself to be a mere cog in a vast industrial machinery, and the dull routine of it all oppresses him.

> "Forenoon, and afternoon, and night;—forenoon,
> And afternoon, and night;—forenoon, and—what?
> The empty song repeats itself. No more?"

Added to this is the fact that starting to work means generally a *breaking of old ties.* Even if the boy stays at home and boards with his parents, the home ties are no longer the same. He has acquired a new independence now that he, too, is a bread-winner. The old restraints are loosed; his status even in the home comes to be one of contract. The break is most complete, of course, in case of the youth who goes to a new community to make his living among strangers. The freedom, the new temptations, the loneliness of being without friends and with no acquaintances save fellow-workmen—no wonder that the boy in a new town often goes wrong.

Jane Addams has given us an interpretation of the spirit of youth that is almost prophetic in its insight. There is not a page in her book that one can afford to lose; but we must be content here with two brief passages:

> "Many boys in the years immediately following school find no restraint either in tradition or character. They drop learning as a childish thing and look upon school as a tiresome task that is finished. They demand pleasure as the right of one who earns his own living. They have developed no capacity for recreation demanding mental effort or even muscular skill, and are obliged to seek only that depending upon sight, sound and taste. Many of them begin to pay board to their mothers, and make the best bargain they can, that more money may be left

to spend in the evening. They even bait the excitement of 'losing a job,' and often provoke a foreman if only to see 'how much he will stand.' They are constitutionally unable to enjoy things continuously and follow their vagrant wills unhindered. Unfortunately the city lends itself to this distraction. At the best, it is difficult to know what to select and what to eliminate as objects of attention among its thronged streets, its glittering shops, its gaudy advertisements of shows and amusements."

"One of the most pathetic sights in the public dance halls of Chicago is the number of young men, obviously honest young fellows from the country, who stand about vainly hoping to make the acquaintance of some 'nice girl.' They look eagerly up and down the rows of girls, many of whom are drawn to the hall by the same keen desire for pleasure and social intercourse which the lonely young men themselves feel. One Sunday night at twelve o'clock I had occasion to go into a large public dance hall. As I was standing by the rail looking for the girl I had come to find, a young man approached me and quite simply asked me to introduce him to some 'nice girl,' saying that he did not know anyone there. On my replying that a public dance hall was not the best place in which to look for a nice girl, he said, 'But I don't know any other place where there is a chance to meet any kind of a girl. I'm awfully lonesome since I came to Chicago.' And then he added, rather defiantly, 'Some nice girls do come here! It is one of the best halls in town.' He was voicing the 'bitter loneliness' that many city men remember to have experienced during the first years after they had 'come up to town.'"*

Later adolescence is often called the "*wild oats*" period. It is true, indeed, that most boys now have their fling. It is true, too, that from these years on through the twenties more crimes are committed than at any other time of life. But the wild doings of youth are not usually caused by purposed badness of character. They are often enough a natural result of the conditions of which we have just been thinking.

6. In later adolescence **religion may easily be lost,** either through *disuse* or through *doubt.*

(1) *Religion may simply die out of the youth's life.* The new freedom permits him to stay away from church, and it gets easy to stay

* Addams: "The Spirit of Youth and the City Streets," pp. 11, 54.

away. Work makes him forget religion; success keeps him from feeling its need. It is a law of life that use gives strength; a capacity unused weakens and dies. It is as true of the religious instinct as of any other. One need not be a sinner to lose God; he need only forget Him.

(2) *This is life's doubting time.* About the beginning of the twenties many—perhaps most—men and women pass through a period of doubt and negation respecting the truths of religion. There are many causes. The disillusionment of these years often brings a sense of the worthlessness of religious hopes. The college student's first vision of the great truths of science calls in question the religious conceptions he had before acquired—and all too often rightly, because his teachers have forced upon him dogmas that he could not understand, and with the best of intentions have led him to believe impossible things. The youth, too, who gets no higher education catches the spirit of the popular science of newspapers and magazines, with a more disastrous result because it is poor science on the one hand, and he is less able to understand on the other. Perhaps he is caught by the argument of the labor agitator or socialist leader, who inveighs against religion because the church is itself a "club of the rich." Aside from all these external incentives, however, the youth is impelled to doubt from within. His metaphysical instincts have awakened. His reason is active. He must know what he believes, and he must systematize his principles of life. He seeks a unity of conception. He is a creed-maker. And just because his old religious ideas were the ideas of a child, they will not fall into unity and harmony with one another or with the new conceptions which every day brings. He can no longer be content with the old answer that these are mysteries. Youth acknowledges no mysteries. He turns to doubt.

7. But later adolescence has its **reconstructive forces.** Great as are the chances for disintegration in these years, life builds itself anew. We note three such forces:

(1) *Education.* Doubt can be met and resolved by more complete knowledge. Youth is open-minded. Take your young doubter at his word, and meet his intellectual difficulty with an intellectual answer, and you need have no fear. He is no skeptic. He seeks the *truth*, and he will accept it when it comes. Make sure that you *know enough* to teach him; make sure that you have the truth.

The routine dullness of labor, too, may be banished if the youth but learns more of his task and its bearings upon human life. Disillusionment may become warm-hearted comprehension as one gets to *know*,

and his interests widen. We have often wrongly defined culture. It does not mean mere acquaintance with books and paintings, or the ability to talk of historical events. It means breadth of interest—the ability to understand what the next man is doing, and to see the vital relations which his life sustains to mine, and mine to his.

> "If a child goes into a sewing factory with a knowledge of the work she is doing in relation to the finished product; if she is informed concerning the material she is manipulating and the processes to which it is subjected; if she understands the design she is elaborating in its historic relation to art and decoration, her daily life is lifted from drudgery to one of self-conscious activity, and her pleasure and intelligence is registered in her product. . . . Education must be planned so seriously and definitely for the years between fourteen and sixteen that it will be actual trade training so far as it goes, with attention given to the conditions under which money will be actually paid for industrial skill; but at the same time, that the implications, the connections, the relations to the industrial world, will be made clear. A man who makes, year after year, but one small wheel in a modern watch factory, may, if his education has properly prepared him, have a fuller life than did the old watchmaker who made a watch from beginning to end. . . . When all the young people working in factories shall come to use their faculties intelligently, and as a matter of course be interested in what they do, then our manufactured products may at last meet the demands of a cultivated nation, because they will be produced by cultivated workmen. The machine will not be abandoned by any means, but will be subordinated to the intelligence of the man who manipulates it, and will be used as a tool."*

For this education, too, the youth is ready who has experienced anything of the disappointment it is meant to heal. The large number of young men who are in the night schools of great cities, or who are taking correspondence courses, bears witness to this fact. The time is fast coming when our public schools will meet more adequately than they have ever done the needs of that great industrial population which constitutes the body of society.

(2) *Love between the sexes.* In the closing years of this period and in the early twenties "the greatest thing in the world" is likely to

*Addams: "The Spirit of Youth and the City Streets," pp. 122-128.

come into life. It is true that the sex-instincts are susceptible of grave abuse, and that passion may lead to the worst of sins. Yet life has no greater spiritual force than love for one of the opposite sex. It lifts the self above all that is carnal and gross. It makes selfishness impossible. It gains life through losing life. It brings new strength to resist temptation, and puts a new joy into work. The instinct to make a home and to live for one's children is sacred. It is God's revelation of His own nature within us. Too early marriages, of course, are unfortunate; and the conditions of modern life compel the young man of to-day to wait longer than his father did. Yet he is blessed who falls really in love with the right girl. His time of waiting and working will be one of spiritual uplift.

(3) *Altruism and social service.* The older adolescent is as ready as was the younger to sacrifice self for sake of others—but now he is more *practical* about it. Altruism is no longer a vague ideal; he seeks definite forms of social service and wants to see results. Not unselfishness in general, but a particular bit of unselfishness that counts for something, will enlist his sympathy and co-operation. The great trouble with many classes and clubs and other organizations for youths who are almost men is that they seem to have nothing *real* to do. Give the youth responsibility; couple him up to the real work of social betterment; make him feel that he is a worker along with you toward the same ends, instead of being himself the object of your endeavor—and you need not work to make a man of him. He will make a man of himself.

8. Finally, we dare not forget that the close of later adolescence marks **"the danger line in religion."** We remember from the figures quoted in the last chapter that there is a time of special religious interest at twenty, and a relatively large number of conversions. But less than one-sixth of the conversions studied took place after twenty. One-half of these, again, were before twenty-five. The chances are a thousand to one against conversion after thirty. Our duty is obvious. Preachers have appealed for repentance on the ground that we know not what hour we shall die. Stronger far is the appeal of the facts respecting the age of conversion. *Now* is the time, not because of what we do not know about death, but because of what we do know about life. Every day's postponement makes it the more certain that our pupil never will consecrate his life to God.

## QUESTIONS

1. What are some of the factors which contribute to the development of individuality in later adolescence?

2. Into what three great classes do differences of education divide our pupils in later adolescence?

3. In what sense does later adolescence bring a new and direct contact with reality?

4. Tell something of the physical and intellectual energy of later adolescence.

5. Discuss some of the forces which tend to tear life down in this period.

6. Why is later adolescence a time when religion may easily be lost?

7. Why is later adolescence a time of doubt? How does its doubt differ from that of early adolescence?

8. Show how education may serve as a reconstructive force in a life that has been attacked by doubt, disillusionment or temptation.

9. Discuss the spiritual value of love between the sexes.

10. How does the altruism of later adolescence differ from that of early adolescence?

11. Why does the close of later adolescence mark the danger line in religion?

## LESSON VIII

### Instinct

We have thought now of the chief characteristics of each stage in the development of a child. We have learned something of *how personality grows.* It would be well if we could take up the other problem of *how the mind works.* We should think then of those great principles of mental life which hold true in every stage of its development. But there will not be time to do that in any systematic way.

We shall spend three lessons, however, in a closer study of **the laws that determine action.** We have spoken a good deal of instinct, habit and will; and it is highly important that we understand clearly just what we mean by these terms. At the same time these three lessons may serve to recall and summarize many of the things we have learned thus far.

One thing must be said at the outset. When we distinguish instinct, habit and will as determining action, we do not mean to classify actions into mutually exclusive groups. In most of our behavior, the three are together present as determining factors. Any ordinary action is partly instinctive, partly voluntary, and partly habitual. Instinct determines our general tendencies or attitudes in presence of a situation, and so lays down certain broad limits within which action will lie. The will determines its specific character and purpose. Habit, finally, takes care of the details of its execution. Take as an example your conversation and behavior in any social group. Instinct determines the general attitudes you take toward others—whether shy or eager to entertain, ready or slow of speech, vivacious or phlegmatic. Your ideas determine what you want to say and do. Habit forms your words with lips and tongue, maintains your posture and makes your gestures.*

1. **Instincts** are natural tendencies to act in certain ways which result from the inborn organization of the nervous system. This organization is a matter, partly of inheritance from the race as a whole, partly

* One other thing should be said at the outset. These chapters aim to do nothing more than present briefly the substance of Professor James' doctrine on their topics. He has made these subjects peculiarly his own, by his fresh insight and wonderfully clear and attractive treatment. The teacher should read his "Talks to Teachers on Psychology."

of inheritance from our immediate ancestors, and partly of the original variations which constitute our individual endowment. In any case, an action is instinctive just in so far as one does not need to *learn* it, or to *acquire* the tendency to do it.

2. One cannot give a complete **list of the human instincts**, for it is often hard to draw the line between what is instinctive and what has been learned. Such a list would cover a wide variety of actions, from the simple reflexes of early infancy to the sacrifices of a mother's love. Professor James' list may be taken as typical:

> "Among the first reflex movements are crying on contact with the air, sneezing, snuffling, snoring, coughing, sighing, sobbing, gagging, vomiting, hiccuping, starting, moving the limbs when touched, and sucking. To these now may be added hanging by the hands. Later on come biting, clasping objects and carrying them to the mouth, sitting up, standing, creeping and walking. It is probable that the nerve centers for executing these three latter acts ripen spontaneously, just as those for flight have been proved to do in birds, and that the appearance of learning to stand and walk, by trial and failure, is due to the exercise beginning in most children before the centers are ripe. . . . With the first impulses to imitation, those to significant vocalization are born. Emulation rapidly ensues, with pugnacity in its train. Fear of definite objects comes in early, sympathy much later, though on the instinct of sympathy so much in human life depends. Shyness and sociability, play, curiosity, acquisitiveness, all begin very early in life. The hunting instinct, modesty, love, the parental instinct, etc., come later. By the age of fifteen or sixteen the whole array of human instincts is complete. It will be observed that no other mammal, not even the monkey, shows so large a list." *

3. There have been many attempts to **classify the human instincts**, with no result that is entirely satisfactory. Kirkpatrick's classification is, perhaps, the best for our purpose.† He takes the *uses* which instincts serve as the basis of division, and finds five great classes, to which he adds a miscellaneous group.

(1) The *individualistic* instincts are those which serve to maintain the life of the individual. They are the instincts of self-preservation. Feeding, fear, fighting and anger belong to this class.

* "Psychology," Briefer Course, pp. 406, 407.
† "Fundamentals of Child-Study," pp. 51-63.

(2) The *parental* instincts are those associated with reproduction and care for the young. Love between the sexes and the love of parent for child are the principal instincts of this class. These instincts do not appear as a rule until adolescence; yet we may, perhaps, include with them the instinct of children to care for pets, dolls and children younger than themselves. It should be noted, too, that the parental care-taking instinct in adults is not restricted to those who are themselves parents. The successful teacher has a good share of it.

(3) The *social* instincts are those concerned with relations to other persons. This class includes sociability, shyness, sympathy, affection, altruism, modesty, secretiveness, love of approbation, rivalry, jealousy, envy.

(4) The *adaptive* instincts are those which bring the child into closer contact with his environment, and enable him to adapt himself to his surroundings. In this class are three great instincts which are, perhaps, the most important of all in relation to the work of the teacher. They are imitation, play and curiosity.

(5) The *regulative* instincts are those concerned with the formation of ideals and the regulation of life in light of them. They are the instincts of morality and religion.

(6) In a miscellaneous group may be placed the instinct to collect things and enjoy ownership, the instinct to construct or destroy, the instinct to express ideas to others, the instinct to love and enjoy beautiful things.

4. We all know enough of the instinctive activities enumerated in these lists to make plain certain **general characteristics of human instincts:**

(1) The instincts are *indefinite.* They do not provide for any such details of action as do the instincts of lower animals. Instinct leads the bee to build the honeycomb, and dictates even the hexagonal pattern of its cell; it impels the child to construct, but what and how it does not determine. Our instincts do not so much provide particular things to do, as simply general kinds of action. The details are left to be learned through experience. Often enough they provide simply the innate *capacity* for some line of action or of study. Many of them, as fear, anger, jealousy, are emotions as well, and so stand rather for *active attitudes* than for specific acts.

(2) The instincts are *not all present at birth;* but they appear, each in its time, as a result of the natural growth of the nervous system. The question as to just when each instinct appears, and what are the

dominant instincts at each stage in the growth of a child, we have dealt with briefly in preceding chapters.

(3) When instincts do appear, they are often *gradual in their development.* A child does not begin to act all at once in a totally new way, because a new instinct has grown within him. The instinct itself must come to maturity—in some cases very rapidly, in others more slowly. Instincts really *ripen;* they are the result of the gradual maturing of the nerve centers which are responsible for them.

(4) The ripening of an instinct means the development of a new aptitude and the *awakening of a new interest.* The child reaches out eagerly toward anything that may serve as material for the nature-impelled activity within him.

(5) Instincts are *transitory and modifiable.* If they are not used, or if their use leads to disagreeable results, they will die out. When they are used, they become set in the definite directions which that use has taken, and so become habits.

5. **The bearing of these characteristics of instinct upon the work of the teacher** has been set forth by Professor James in a passage so striking that we must quote it at length:

> "We see the law of transiency corroborated on the widest scale by the alternation of different interests and passions as human life goes on. With the child, life is all play and fairy-tales and learning the external properties of things; with the youth, it is bodily exercises of the more systematic sort, novels of the real world, boon fellowship and song, friendship and love, nature, travel and adventure, science and philosophy; with the man, ambition and policy, acquisitiveness, responsibility to others, and the selfish zest of the battle of life. If a boy grows up alone at the age of games and sports, and learns neither to play ball, nor row, nor sail, nor ride, nor skate, nor fish, nor shoot, probably he will be sedentary to the end of his days; and, though the best of opportunities be afforded him for learning these things later, it is a hundred to one but he will pass them by and shrink back from the effort of taking those necessary first steps, the prospect of which, at an earlier age, would have filled him with eager delight. . . . In all pedagogy the great thing is to strike the iron while hot, and to seize the wave of the pupil's interest in each successive subject before its ebb has come, so that knowledge may be got and a habit of skill acquired—a headway of interest, in short, secured, on which

afterward the individual may float. There is a happy moment for fixing skill in drawing, for making boys collectors in natural history, and presently dissectors and botanists; then for initiating them into the harmonies of mechanics and the wonders of physical and chemical law. Later, introspective psychology and the metaphysical and religious mysteries take their turn; and, last of all, the drama of human affairs and worldly wisdom in the widest sense of the term. In each of us a saturation point is soon reached in all these things; the impetus of our purely intellectual zeal expires, and unless the topic be one associated with some urgent personal need that keeps our wits constantly whetted about it, we settle into an equilibrium, and live on what we learned when our interest was fresh and instinctive, without adding to the store. Outside of their own business, the ideas gained by men before they are twenty-five are practically the only ideas they shall have in their lives. They *cannot* get anything new. Disinterested curiosity is past, the mental grooves and channels set, the power of assimilation gone. . . . To detect the moment of the instinctive readiness for the subject is, then, the first duty of every educator."*

6. If the detection of the pupil's instincts and interests be the first duty of every teacher, his second duty, no less important, is **the control of instincts.** And the vital problem is—How? What method is best to repress undesirable instincts and to enforce and train those that are desirable?

No instinct, once used, is after that merely an instinct. It has added two things to itself—a *habit* and an *idea*. Just because it has once expressed itself in a certain definite way, it will tend thereafter to express itself in the same way, in accordance with the law of habit. And because its expression has led to some result of which one is conscious, the idea of that result remains in memory and may help to determine future action. The hereditary tendency need no longer be followed blindly. Each time that an instinct is used in action, therefore, it becomes more *definite* and more *intelligent.*

Instincts may be controlled, then, in three ways. First, through *not using* them at all, in which case they in time simply die out. Second, through so using the law of *habit* as to get them definitely fixed in right directions. Third, through so comprehending their results that one's *ideas* will help them lead to efficient and right

*James: "Psychology," Briefer Course, pp. 402-405.

action. Control by ideas we shall deal with when we come to discuss the will; let us think now of control through disuse and habit.

*Disuse* of an instinct can be secured by seeing that the situations which would naturally call it forth are not experienced, and that the materials it needs to express itself are not present. Do not give the destructive child intricate toys whose mechanism is a challenge. Instincts that are disused in time are gone. The nerve pathways have wasted away, as does any part of the body which is not exercised.

*Punishment* is an application of the law of habit as well as of control by ideas. When a painful or disagreeable result has been connected with an instinctive action, a tendency not to employ it is set up.

*Substitution* is, however, the only sure way to deal with an undesirable instinct. Substitute another action for the one you wish to get rid of, and exercise that other as much as you can. It combines with disuse of the wrong instinct a positive fixing of the right one by means of the law of habit. Set your destructive child to work constructing useful things, and you can swing the whole force of his instinct into channels that are worth while. Let your boys work off their pugnacity in athletic games which will instill ideas of loyalty and of teamplay along with the right sort of rivalry. Instead of seeking to repress the "gang," enlist it in a club and give it something to do. The best juvenile court in the world is at Denver, because Judge Lindsey knows how to appeal to that boyish honor which is a part of the spirit of the gang. *Real control is never merely negative.* It is idle simply to stop an action or to seek to eradicate an instinct. Some other action must take the place of the one prevented. The child must do something; and if there be at hand nothing else to do, he will follow the old instinct, even though he feel that it will end in punishment. Your training must be *positive*, always giving the something else to do, centering his attention on what is wanted instead of on what is forbidden, and providing the situations that will call forth right instincts. One can sometimes substitute in this way ahead of time. Before an undesirable instinct appears, you can begin to form the habit of meeting in a better way the situation which would be liable to call it forth.

To enforce and make permanent a good instinct, it is plain that we need simply make of it a habit. *Exercise* the good instinct, and make sure that it brings each time good and pleasurable results; and it will acquire strength and definiteness.

We must be sure, however, that we understand when instincts are good and when they are bad. No instinct is bad in itself; it is bad

only in some particular application, or when so enlarged as to distort the well-rounded development of a personality. Acquisitiveness is in itself necessary and good ; it becomes bad if applied to the property of someone else in theft, or if it so enlarges its hold upon a man as to make him what we call "grasping" or a miser. Further, we must not judge the instincts of a child to be bad because they interfere with *our* enjoyment, or are not fitting from *our* point of view. The incessant activity of early childhood and its insatiable curiosity are often very annoying, but they are essential to the child's development.

## QUESTIONS

1. Show how instinct, habit and will cooperate in most of our actions.

2. What do you understand by instinct?

3. Name some of the more important human instincts.

4. Give Kirkpatrick's classification of the human instincts.

5. What is meant by the statement that human instincts are indefinite?

6. Are all instincts present at birth? When does the instinct to creep appear? To walk? Fear of the dark? Social instincts?

7. Give instances of the gradual development of instincts.

8. What is meant by the statement that instincts are transitory and modifiable?

9. Discuss the bearing of the doctrine of instinct upon the work of the teacher.

10. "Every time that an instinct is used in action, it becomes more definite and more intelligent"—why?

11. Describe the methods by which instincts may be controlled.

12. What is the difference between negative and positive methods of training? Which is the better, and why?

## LESSON IX

### Habit

We hear habit so much discussed from the moral point of view that we are apt to associate the term with moral habits only. But morality is only one of the aspects from which the law of habit may be regarded. It is in reality the widest and most fundamental of all the laws of mental life. It underlies everything that the mind does. Without it, there would be no *acquiring* of tendencies, abilities or information. Perception, memory and reasoning depend on the law of habit just as truly as do acts of will.

1. **The physical basis of habit** is found in the fact that nerve cells, like all other living tissue, are modified through use. A nerve cell that has once acted is so changed that it is easier for it to act again in the same way. A connection that has once been made by the transmission of a nerve impulse from one cell to another, is likely to be made again, and then again, until a very definite pathway has been established.

2. Since it is so wide in its application, **the law of habit** must be formulated in very general terms. It may be stated thus: *Any connection, nervous or mental, which has been made, tends to recur. The degree of probability of its recurrence depends on its frequency, recency and intensity in past experience.*

(1) Note, in the first place, that this law applies to *any connection*, nervous or mental. It may be the connection between an impression and a movement. We unconsciously take out our keys as we approach the home doorstep; the skilled pianist, without thinking, strikes the right key for each note on the score before her; the bicyclist "instinctively" balances himself by a compensating movement as he feels his body incline to one side or the other. These are not inborn connections of impression and movement; we misuse the term "instinctive" when we apply it to any such actions. They were at first matters of conscious experience, or even of painstaking effort. But through repetition a pathway of connection has been established between sensory and motor nerve cells, such that consciousness has now little or nothing to do in determining the action. Such a habit is an *acquired reflex*.

But this is only one of the many types of connection which are included under our law. There is the connection between an impression and an idea or a feeling. How many of us have found that in certain situations we are bound each time to think of the same things or to experience the same feelings? There is the connection, again, between one idea and another, such that the first habitually calls to mind its fellow, even though they may have but little logical relation. Like habitual connections become established between ideas and feelings, between ideas and actions, or feelings and actions. The law applies even to the connection between actions and other actions. Simple practice is enough to make habitual and efficient a coordination of muscles which was at first difficult and poorly accomplished. Learning to write, to ride a bicycle, to play basketball or tennis, are examples.

We need not study in detail any of these types of habitual connection. The main point is to see how general and universal in application the law of habit is. *Any* connection, nervous or mental—between impressions, ideas, thoughts, memories, feelings, movements—once made, tends to recur. And in all these cases the established habit tends more and more to drop below the level of consciousness and to become a matter of mechanical nerve-action. This is simply nature's general provision of economy and growth in mental life. As fast as the mind masters a situation, it hands it over to the mechanical care of habit. The mind is thus left free for new and important things; familiar situations and details, through our established habits, take care of themselves.

(2) The second part of the law asserts that the strength of an habitual connection, and consequent probability of its recurrence, depend on three factors. These factors, which may be called *the variables of the law of habit*, are the frequency, recency and intensity of the connection in past experience.

*Frequency.* The more often a connection is repeated, the stronger it becomes. Speaking figuratively, the pathway over which the nerve-current goes becomes more deeply worn. Every time you think or act, you fix more definitely your habits of thinking or acting.

*Recency.* Other things being equal, that connection will recur which has been most recently made. I heard just now the bell of a locomotive, and there flashed into mind the thought of last Monday's journey. It has not been a very frequent one; but it was the most recent connection with a locomotive that had place in my store of experiences. The pathways tend to become obliterated in time unless they are freshly traversed now and then.

*Intensity.* A connection that has been made with force or intensity will be more likely to recur than one lacking in original strength. When two things have been connected in experience under stress of some emotion, or with the strain of effort to overcome obstacles, or in the full glare of voluntary attention, their connection is more likely to persist. This factor of intensity covers a wide range of experiences, from a child's aversion to some dainty that has made it sick to the awful distinctness with which some scene of sudden disaster is burned into the mind. A pathway stamped hard and deep, if only once, is apt to remain.

3. The illustrations just used make it plain that the applications of the law of habit may be roughly divided into two groups. Sometimes it deals primarily with ideas, and sometimes with actions. We can form *habits of thinking* and *habits of acting*. In its application to thinking, the law of habit lies at the foundation of what is called the **association of ideas.**

We have all had the experience of tracing out the links of association which called some idea to mind. You have found yourself thinking of some person or event, humming some tune, or repeating some snatch of poetry; and you have said to yourself, "Now, what made me think of *that?*" And setting yourself to work to recall the course of your reverie, you have been able to see how one thing led to another, till finally there was called up the thought which surprised you.

*The general principle of association* may be formulated in two propositions. First, no idea comes up for use by the mind without being called up by some sensation or other idea. Second, no sensation or idea leaves the mind without trying, at least, to call up some idea from past experience.

This general principle, however, raises the question: *What* particular idea will a given sensation or idea call up? It will call up something either that has actually been connected with itself in past experience, or that is similar to itself, whether before connected or not. There are therefore two types of association. *Association by contiguity* takes place when an idea comes to mind because of its past connection with another, as when, thinking of a certain man, I am reminded of Mackinac Island, where I met him. *Association by similarity* takes place when an idea comes to mind because of some point of likeness between it and another, as when a total stranger reminds me of some friend.

It is evident that association by contiguity is simply one aspect of the

working of the law of habit. The thought of worship calls up my home church rather than any other because of the factor of frequency. Speak of music, and I will think of the last oratorio in which I sang. The sound of the fire bell always brings to mind the night when a whole city block burned around our home, because of the intensity with which that experience impressed itself upon my childish mind.

Association by similarity seems different. One idea may call up another that has not previously been connected with it, provided the second is like it in some point. The simplicity and earnestness of the Christian life reminded Paul of the athletic games at Corinth—"I therefore so run, not as uncertainly ; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air." Yet this type of association, too, is dependent upon the law of habit. It involves two factors : first, that some single characteristic of the first thing thought of stands out and catches the attention ; second, that this single characteristic calls up something with which it has been connected in the past. The second of these factors, it is evident, is nothing more than association by contiguity. Even in our most novel and original associations, therefore, we are dependent upon the resources which experience has put at our command. If a man had never seen athletic games, simplicity and earnestness might stand out as fundamental characteristics of Christianity with all the clearness that they did for Paul, yet he would not be reminded of such a contest.

So we see why the law of habit may well be regarded as the widest and most fundamental of all laws of the mind. Since it has so large a part in determining what ideas shall come before the mind, *it underlies everything that is done by intellect and will.* We all know that one's past experience determines his ways of looking at things, of thinking and acting. In perception, in memory, in reasoning and in willing, we are dependent upon the laws of association.

4. The law of habit thus determines our actions indirectly, by first determining what ideas will present themselves to the will. But it also may **determine actions directly and mechanically,** without the intervention of ideas. When we think of this aspect of its work, a fourth variable may be added—that of *result.* An action that has resulted successfully or pleasurably tends to recur ; one that has resulted badly or disagreeably tends not to be done again. The chick that has pecked at some distasteful morsel will soon, by the mere working of habit, leave it alone. The burnt child fears the fire, even if it may not call up any definite ideas concerning the past unpleasant experience.

We are all familiar with the characteristics of an action that has become a habit, as contrasted with one that is determined by ideas. The habitual action is performed with more speed and accuracy and with less fatigue. It is done without conscious attention, and the mind is left free to concern itself with other things while the action goes on. As I write just now, my mind is busy with the ideas I wish to express, while the work of writing, with all the intricate coordination of muscles it involves, is taken care of mechanically by my nervous system. I do not pay the slightest conscious attention to the problem of how to form the letters or how to make my fingers work together. I simply have my thought and will to write it—then habit does the rest. Habit is the *executive* of my ideas.

5. It is hard to overestimate **the importance and value of the law of habit.** It is true that comparatively few of our actions are *merely* mechanical—matters of unconscious habit and nothing more. Most actions are in some degree controlled by ideas. But the mechanical factor is always there. In every action that is determined by ideas habit has at least two functions: first, as law of association it brings the ideas themselves before the mind; and second, as executive it carries out the details of action once the ideas have decided what to do. It is evident that many an action is pretty completely caused by habit, even when the doer thinks that he has consciously chosen it in perfect freedom. The drunkard never thinks that he is in the grip of an all-powerful habit. He imagines each time that he is freely choosing to drink, and that he can stop whenever he pleases; yet his action is as absolutely determined by habit as that of the man who goes by daylight into his bedroom and switches on the electric light as he enters the door.

The practical conclusion is obvious. The problem we all face is that of *using the law of habit* so that it will help instead of hinder the right moral and intellectual growth. As Professor James puts it:

> "The great thing in all education is to make our nervous system our ally instead of our enemy. It is to fund and capitalize our acquisitions, and live at ease upon the interest of the fund. For this we must make automatic and habitual, as early as possible, as many useful actions as we can, and guard against the growing into ways that are likely to be disadvantageous to us, as we should guard against the plague."

Note the insistence, "*as early as possible.*" The reasons are plain. If we do not begin right habits early, we shall all the time be growing

into wrong ones, which we shall afterwards have to undo before we can establish the better. Further, life does not always remain plastic. Our ways get more and more fixed as we grow older, and it is hard for the mature man to acquire new habits. You remember James' statement, quoted in the last chapter, that before we are twenty-five we acquire most of the ideas we shall ever have, except those directly concerned with our business and the ordinary events of life. He maintains that we acquire the larger part of our personal habits before twenty, and that the character of most men is pretty well set by the age of thirty.

Above all, we need to remember that within the limits of our plasticity, the law of habit is *always sure to act.* It does not concern itself primarily with great moral issues, but with the ordinary things which we are apt to deem trivial. And it has no exceptions. There is only one safe rule to follow: *Refrain entirely from actions you do not wish to become habitual. Keep absolutely apart, both in mind and in life, the things you want kept apart.* There is no moment of life too valueless, no action or attitude or thought too insignificant, for habit to take account of and fasten upon us. James puts this with a vividness that is startling:

> "Could the young but realize how soon they will become mere walking bundles of habits, they would give more heed to their conduct while in the plastic state. We are spinning our own fates, good or evil, and never to be undone. Every smallest stroke of virtue or of vice leaves its never so little scar. The drunken Rip Van Winkle, in Jefferson's play, excuses himself for every fresh dereliction by saying, 'I won't count this time!' Well! he may not count it, and a kind heaven may not count it; but it is being counted none the less. Down among his nerve cells and fibers the molecules are counting it, registering and storing it up to be used against him when the next temptation comes. Nothing we ever do is, in strict scientific literalness, wiped out."

6. **How shall we make sure** that we are securely establishing the good habit we desire, or making permanent the association needed? There is only one way to gain a new habit, or to break up an old one—that is to *keep steadily working at it.* Habits are not built out of resolutions or high emotions or inspiring visions, but out of repeated actions. Just keep on doing the right thing, and you will wake some morning to find that you have permanent possession of it.

The same principle applies to the making of associations. All education is at bottom a matter of getting habits of thought. A fact is learned just in so far as associations are established which will insure its permanent possession, and its availability when needed. In making such associations, the factor of frequency exhorts to *repetition*, recency to *review*, while intensity insists that the association must be *clear and distinct*, in the full light of *attention*.

The need of attention to insure strength of connection requires special emphasis. Because we have said that habits may be incidentally acquired, and that the law is always sure to act, the conclusion does not follow that we may rely upon incidental and careless repetition for the establishment of a desired habit or association. Just as the utmost care must be used to keep undesirable connections out of life, the most strenuous energy must be put forth to get those that are good. The only safe rule here is: *Put all the strength you can into the act that is to become a habit. Center your whole mind upon the fact you wish to remember.*

Professor James, thinking of actions rather than of associations, gives this and three other concrete maxims which constitute the best practical summary of the whole matter:

> "(1) Launch yourself with as strong and decided an initiative as possible. Accumulate all the possible circumstances which shall reinforce the right motives; put yourself assiduously in conditions that encourage the new way; make engagements incompatible with the old; take a public pledge, if the case allows; in short, envelop your resolution with every aid you know.
>
> "(2) Never suffer an exception to occur till the new habit is securely rooted in your life. Each lapse is like the letting fall of a ball of string which one is carefully winding up; a single slip undoes more than a great many turns will wind again.
>
> "(3) Seize the very first opportunity to *act* on every resolution you make, and on every emotional prompting you may experience in the direction of the habits you aspire to gain.
>
> "(4) Keep the faculty of effort alive in you by a little gratuitous exercise every day. That is, be systematically ascetic or heroic in little unnecessary points, do every day or two something for no other reason than that you would rather not do it,

so that when the hour of dire need draws nigh, it may not find you unnerved and untrained to stand the test." *

## QUESTIONS

1. What is the physical basis of habit?
2. State the law of habit.
3. Explain the variables of the law of habit
4. State the general principle of the association of ideas.
5. What is association by contiguity? Show how the variables of the law of habit apply to such associations.
6. What is association by similarity? Give an illustration of your own. Show how association by similarity is dependent upon association by contiguity.
7. "Habit underlies everything that is done by intellect and will" —show why this is true.
8. What fourth variable may be added to the law of habit when it deals directly with actions?
9. Is an action that is willed determined in any degree by habit? Give reasons for your answer.
10. How can we make sure that we do not fall into bad habits or acquire undesirable associations?
11. How can we make sure of acquiring good habits and desirable associations?
12. Give James' rules for acquiring a new habit or breaking up an old one.

* The quotations in this chapter are all from James' "Psychology," Briefer Course, pp. 142-150. The chapter on Habit should be read by every teacher. It is one of the best sermons ever written.

## LESSON X

### The Will

People often speak of the will as though it were a sort of absolute ruler, independent of the rest of the mind, and master of all its ideas and feelings and actions. The truth is that the will is itself a part of the mind, and must develop as must any other of its faculties. One's will depends on his ideas and feelings, instincts and habits, just as truly as they in turn are controlled by it.

1. To understand the will, we must begin with the fundamental principle that "all consciousness is motor."* **Every idea is as well an impulse to act.** Thoughts are forces. Left to itself, any thought will issue in action.

(1) This is a natural consequence of the structure of the nervous system. We have learned how its cells are so coupled up that "action of some sort is the natural outcome of every nerve current, and hence of every sensation and idea." † We called this the *law of motor discharge*.

(2) Many experiments have proved that, even though we check the impulse and prevent the action, we cannot entirely stop the motor discharge. Our sensations and ideas reflect themselves constantly in little starts of the muscles, in changes of heart-beat, breathing, secretion, digestion, and the like. Everyone has felt chagrined at some time or other because of a blush that would come when he did not wish it.

(3) A hypnotized subject is extremely *suggestible*. He proceeds to act upon any idea that is put into his mind by the person who hypnotized him. It is because the hypnotic sleep has emptied his mind of ideas, and the one suggested takes complete possession of it. If one be told while awake that he is an animal, a host of conflicting ideas and sensations present themselves to disprove the suggestion; but if while hypnotized, these critical ideas do not come to mind, the suggested idea is left alone, and it issues in action.

(4) In normal wide-awake life we often act *impulsively*. See a magazine that looks interesting, and you take out your purse and buy it. Think of golf, and you start for the links. Some judgment comes to

* James: "Psychology," Briefer Course, p. 370. † See p. 19.

mind, and it is no sooner thought than spoken. Note the condition, however—*if left to itself*, an idea issues in action. If conflicting ideas present themselves, you will not do the impulsive thing. You will not buy the magazine if the thought comes that there are other things more worth reading; you will not play golf if you remember that you have an engagement; you will not express your judgment if it occurs to you that it might hurt someone.

2. **The distinction between impulsive and voluntary action** thus becomes plain. An action is *impulsive* that results from the simple presence and impulse of one idea. When you "speak before you think," it is not that you did not think the judgment you blurt forth, but that you did not think of anything else but it. In Bible history King Saul is a notable example of an impulsive man. His mistakes and sins were the result, not so much of settled badness of character as of a disposition to think of only one thing at a time. An action is *voluntary*, on the other hand, when more than one idea has been present, offering an alternative, and it is therefore the result of choice.

3. Ideas differ greatly, of course, in the **degree of impulsive strength** which they possess. Some ideas are relatively weak in their push toward action, and others so urgent that they are hard to resist. The rule is that the impulsive strength of an idea depends upon its relation to instincts and habits, and upon the immediacy of the satisfaction it promises. The strongest of all impulses are associated with those objects which appeal directly to elemental instincts—the bodily appetites, the passions and emotions. Ideas that are in line with acquired habits may have as great a force, though we seldom feel it quite as intensely. Things near at hand, immediate results and present goods, have an impulsive attraction which diminishes rapidly with their removal in space or postponement in time. It is much easier to let each moment take care of itself than to act for sake of some end to be realized in the distant future—the here and now seems so much more real, and immediate satisfactions more tangible. In any normal man, therefore, distinctly rational ideas of action—those derived from far-sighted consideration—are relatively cold and weak in impulsive power. Such ideas it requires an effort to hold before the mind, in face of the overwhelming surge of stronger impulses.

4. **An act of will** involves three things; first, the presence before the mind of alternative lines of action; second, the acceptance of some one as our choice; third, the resulting action.

The first factor of an act of will—*the presence of alternatives*—

depends upon the working of the laws of association. You cannot will to do a thing unless you first think of it; and you cannot think of it unless it is called up by the laws of association which determine the appearance of ideas before your mind. How many times we have acted miserably in some situation and afterward were sorry for what we had done—yet we did the best we knew at the moment! We would have chosen the better thing had we thought of it; the trouble was that it did not come to mind at all.

The second factor in willing—*the power to choose* some one of the alternative ideas—depends on the power to keep *that* idea before the focus of attention. The secret of will is, after all, concentrated attention. Just in the degree that one can keep thinking of the right thing and keep other ideas from taking possession of the mind, he is certain always to choose the right thing. The idea that is consistently kept before the mind is pretty sure to issue in action, simply because of its own impulsive power.

And this makes plain the third factor of willing. *The action* is not something that we add to ideas; it is not some power that we create to help them out. It is the physical result that naturally follows when an idea is kept steadily before the mind—provided, of course, one has the ability to carry it out.

5. **The will is dependent upon the laws of association.** We cannot will to do anything of which we have not had some previous experience. The ideas which shape the will come from former actions and their results—actions which we either have done ourselves or have observed in others. One has a good and efficient will in the degree that he can do just the right thing at each particular time and place; and his ability to do the right thing depends upon his ability to *think* of it. What brilliant conversationalists we should all be if we had such command of the stories and epigrams we have heard that we could think each moment of the one that is most apt! And how sensibly we should act if we could think in every situation of that item of our general body of knowledge which bears most vitally upon it!

So, after all, *one's associations measure the degree of freedom which his will possesses.* The man who chooses from a wide range of alternatives is more free than he who can think of only a few possible things to say or do. To develop a strong and efficient will, one must begin at the foundation by widening the range of his ideas, and by making such associations as shall insure that they will be at hand when he needs them.

There is another side, of course. *The will itself helps to determine*

*what ideas shall come before the mind.* When we thought of the laws of association in the last chapter we left out one factor. In case both of contiguity and similarity, *of the many possible ideas which might come up, that is most likely to come which is most in accord with the general trend or purpose of thought for the time.* Under stress of a great grief, everything reminds one of his loss; the happy man never thinks of misfortune. At work on your Bible lesson, the name Paul makes you think of the apostle; in conversation with your family, it reminds you of your neighbor boy. One set of ideas comes to mind on Sunday, another set at business during the week. A purpose, therefore, if one is really in earnest about it, will keep bringing before the mind such ideas as are consistent with itself. But, remember, a purpose cannot *create* ideas. The will can only *select* the best of the resources which experience has put at its command.

6. **The idea which holds the attention** is the idea which will result in action. Attention may be either spontaneous or voluntary. Spontaneously, we give attention to ideas which appeal to our interests, our instincts, habits or feelings. Voluntarily, we keep the attention upon some idea because of its relation to some other idea or purpose. In general, ideas which appeal spontaneously have a strong impulsive power, while those which appeal more intellectually are relatively weak.

Undoubtedly a great part of our willing results from attention which makes its choice more or less spontaneously—and it is well that it is so. But we all know, as a matter of experience, that one *can* pull himself together and keep his attention unflinchingly centered on the right thought, to the exclusion of any number of more strongly impulsive ideas that seek to crowd it out. It demands effort, it costs sacrifice, it often means a tremendous battle; but it can be done. Here, then, is the very wellspring of freedom within a man. The things to which he gives attention are not decided for him; they are not even the mechanical results of his own instincts and habits. He may some day summon an energy of which he himself had never dreamed, and center his life about a new object.

He *may;* but he most likely will not. This freedom does not lessen in the least the force of habit and association in molding a life. The greatest fool on earth is he who lets bad habits and associations enter into the very building of his soul, relying upon his "freedom of will" to purge him of them some day, and to create his life anew.

One condition must be fulfilled if effort is in any case to be put forth. To command it, an object must seem worth while. *It must*

*bring results*, or give very definite promise of them. Attention cannot be kept long, even through effort, upon an unchanging and fruitless object. If you begin to act, and results come, it becomes easy. If they do not come immediately, the object must be kept alive by thought about it, picturing in anticipation its many desirable consequences. The man who can think most fruitfully about some purpose, and who can most vividly imagine its concrete results, will be best able to command the effort needed to hold it before the mind. For another, the same idea may simply die out, for the very barrenness of his thought about it. Great reformers and discoverers are always intensely imaginative men.

The weak-willed man, on the other hand, is such because he is unable to keep his thought consistently upon the right idea. Professor James gives so concrete a picture of this fatal defect of a weak will, that we must quote it at length. Where the right idea is opposed by stronger impulses, he says,

> "the whole intellectual ingenuity of the man usually goes to work to crowd it out of sight, and to find for the emergency names by the help of which the dispositions of the moment may sound sanctified, and sloth or passion may reign unchecked. How many excuses does the drunkard find when each new temptation comes! It is a new brand of liquor which the interests of intellectual culture in such matters oblige him to test; moreover, it is poured out and it is sin to waste it; also others are drinking and it would be churlishness to refuse. Or it is but to enable him to sleep, or just to get through this job of work; or it isn't drinking, it is because he feels so cold; or it is Christmas day; or it is a means of stimulating him to make a more powerful resolution in favor of abstinence than any he has hitherto made; or it is just this once, and once doesn't count, etc., ad libitum—it is, in fact, anything you like except *being a drunkard*. *That* is the conception that will not stay before the poor soul's attention. But if he once gets able to pick out that way of conceiving, from all the other possible ways of conceiving the various opportunities which occur, if through thick and thin he holds to it that this is being a drunkard and is nothing else, he is not likely to remain one long. The effort by which he succeeds in keeping the right *name* unwaveringly present to his mind proves to be his saving moral act." *

* "Psychology," Briefer Course, p. 453.

7. It is thus in the realm of ideas that the real battles of the will are fought. To *get* the right ideas before the mind, and, once gotten, to *hold* them there, are the vital issues of good and efficient willing. After that, the action follows as a natural result of the impulsive power which right ideas, like all others, possess.

One qualification must be put upon this principle. The action will naturally follow, *provided* we have not gotten into the habit of resting content with mere thinking. It is easy enough to fall into that attitude of life which conceives that having ideas is an adequate substitute for carrying them out, that mere thinking of good deeds can take the place of doing them, and that feeling noble sentiments is a sufficient manifestation of right character. Some of the most inspiring passages in Rousseau's "Emile" deal with the duties of a father and mother in bringing up their children. "Neither poverty, nor work, nor social considerations," says Rousseau, "can relieve a father of the obligation to be his son's constant companion and teacher." Yet Rousseau himself abandoned each of his five children, as soon as they were born, to the mercies of a foundling hospital. He never saw them again, and their identity was completely lost; while he did not trouble himself so much as to keep a record of the dates of their birth.

Rousseau was, of course, an abnormal man. Yet everyone who believes in some good principle when generally and abstractly stated, but fails to see its possible application to his particular and concrete opportunities, is treading the same road. We fall into this attitude in just the same way that we fall into any other habit. The man who has had an ennobling thought and has felt its impulsive power, but has let it remain fruitless, will be liable afterward to let that thought come and go before his mind without ever issuing in action. He may detain it in attention, and cherish it in warm devotion—*inside;* but it is impotent to make of him a better man.

The crowning counsel, then, to secure strength and efficiency of will, is the third of the maxims of habit quoted at the end of the last chapter. *Act!* Act decisively and promptly when once you have decided what is right. Seek opportunities to apply in actual doing the things you believe. This is a counsel of especial importance in connection with religion; and it has a very practical bearing upon the work of the teacher. Do not exhort your class abstractly without giving them concrete things to do; do not fill them with general truths of morality and religion without helping them to realize those truths in life and service. Otherwise you run the risk that your

teaching itself may make the means of salvation impotent in their future life.

8. We have described the will thus far in terms chiefly of its relation to the intellect. But we must not forget that the soul has a trinity of powers—feeling as well as intellect and will. **One's will is determined by his feelings as truly as by his ideas.** Feeling may enter into each of the three factors of an act of will. As trend or set of the mind, a feeling helps to bring before one ideas consistent with itself. It keeps the attention naturally and spontaneously upon such as appeal to it. And it gives to the idea it chooses a degree of impulsive strength that carries one into prompt and whole-souled action.

There is a third great counsel, therefore, for the development of a strong and efficient will. To right ideas and habits of decisive action add the power of feeling. Get the affections centered upon things that are worth while. Enlist the heart as well as the mind.

"The expulsive power of a new affection" is life's eternal miracle. Men have sometimes questioned the possibility of conversion. Yet it has been a blessed fact in thousands of lives. Feeling transforms even the working of that hidden mechanism of association that determines one's thoughts. Many a man's real manhood dates from his winning the love of a wife or from the opening to him of the heart of a child. His thoughts, his choices, his acts, all center about his new devotion. Conversions are natural. They are begotten in human relationships as well as divine. Love is indeed "the greatest thing in the world." It saves men.

He who lacks feeling, even were his will strong enough without it, lacks the highest manliness. The ideal of the stoics is as untrue as it is unlovely. They sought to look at the world of things and men calmly, dispassionately and impersonally. Feeling, they thought, but clouds the vision and brings turmoil to the soul. A man ought to be purely rational, his mind what Huxley called a perfect "logic machine." And so one might well be, if he lived alone, the only person in a world of matter, his only problem the comprehension of impersonal forces, and his only aim to manage them. But our world is not such. We live with other persons. *Life's real problems are social; its true values are those of personal relationship.* Even a God who was absolutely alone would have nothing to live for. We need feeling, therefore. It is the link that binds man to man, the fire that warms an otherwise dead and cheerless world. Without it, one might understand things, but could never live with and for persons.

Just as feeling exists for sake of personal relationships, it is begotten

only in personal relationships. You cannot by precept or proverb teach a feeling to your pupil, or generate it by command. It must be by life with him, by giving yourself to him. The secret of "personal work" is personal relationship.

9. **The final secret of strength of will is the grace of God.** What is true of the feelings begotten in earthly relationships is infinitely more true of those that spring from the contact of the soul with its Father. There is no love like His, no feeling mightier than the sense of His presence and help. Not upon ideas and sheer effort of attention merely, not even upon the strength alone that comes from earthly affection, need the wills of men rely; they may lay hold of the love and grace of an almighty God. The experience that Paul records in the seventh chapter of his letter to the Romans, is true of all humanity. He who fails of his own strength to free himself from "the law of sin and death" may yet live to "thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

## QUESTIONS

1. Why is every idea an impulse? How does the behavior of hypnotized persons show this?

2. Explain the distinction between impulsive and voluntary action.

3. Upon what does the impulsive strength of an idea depend?

4. What three factors are involved in an act of will? Upon what does each depend?

5. Why is the will dependent upon the laws of association?

6. In what sense does the will itself help to determine what ideas shall come before the mind?

7. Show how choice depends upon attention.

8. Why is a man weak-willed who cannot concentrate his attention?

9. Why do good resolutions harm instead of help if they are not carried out in action?

10. Explain how feeling helps to determine the will.

11. What is meant by "the expulsive power of a new affection"? Show how the final secret of strength of will is the grace of God.

12. In what way is one's will limited and determined by his past experiences and habits? In what respects undetermined?

13. What are some of the things that a teacher can do to help develop a good and efficient will within his pupil?

14. What argument can be deduced from the teachings of this chapter in favor of telling children what they ought to do instead of what they ought not to do?

## LESSON XI

### Morality and Religion

Our primary interest, as Sunday school teachers, is in the moral and religious growth of our pupils. We may well conclude this part of our course, therefore, with a study of the development of morality and religion in childhood and youth.

#### I.—MORALITY

A little child is neither moral nor immoral. He is the creature of his instincts. His actions are neither good nor bad; they are simply natural. Morality begins when he can will his actions, and when he first sees a difference between a better and a worse way and chooses one or the other.

1. *How does he come to tell the better from the worse?* The question brings us face to face with one of the great issues of philosophy. On the one hand stand those who believe that the distinction between right and wrong is innate within us, and that conscience is an intuitive and infallible guide. On the other hand are those who maintain that our knowledge of right and wrong, like the knowledge of other things, depends upon experience.

There is truth on both sides. We shall understand it best if we think of conscience as but another name for **the moral instincts.** The moral nature is instinctive. Like other human instincts, it is inborn, yet delayed in development, and is indefinite and modifiable.

(1) *The moral nature is inborn.* Without an instinctive capacity, no child could be trained to be a moral being. The facts of the world could never give birth to an ideal. We possess an innate power to transcend in vision that which is and to apprehend that which ought to be. We are so made, moreover, that we feel in duty bound by our vision; it weighs upon us as an obligation and inspires us to its own fulfillment. No amount of experience could confer upon us the power so to conceive ideals, nor bring home to us a sense of obligation. This comes not from without; it is the God-given spirit within man.

(2) Yet the moral nature has to develop; it is *delayed in appearance and ripens slowly.* Not until adolescence does it blossom forth into promise of maturity.

(3) *The moral instincts are indefinite and modifiable.* They impel us to form ideals and to feel obligations—but *what* in particular our ideals shall be or just *what* obligations we shall feel, is left to be determined by experience. Our habits and feelings, environment and training, the ideas we have gained for ourselves or have acquired from others—all these go to shape our sense of right and wrong. Conscience is not infallible. It needs to be educated. It may tell one that an action is good or morally indifferent which to another seems bad. The consciences of some men are hardly to be trusted at all. Their finer sensibilities are dulled; their perspective distorted.

(4) Like other instincts, *conscience becomes more completely rational* as life goes on. Feeding, fear, sexual and parental love, sociability, imitation—soon become more than mere instincts. We get to *understand* them, and give them place in our life because we do understand. So too our moral ideals and feelings grow less vague and inarticulate as experience grows. We understand our duties and make rational our ideals. Conscience might finally be best defined as "*reason concerned with moral issues.*"

**2. The child is a natural lawmaker and law-observer.** Will implies the recognition of law. When he cries in order to get something, it is because crying has brought it before. No matter how much you tell him not to cry, or assure him that crying will not bring what he wants; if finally you relent and crying *does* bring it, he will continue to use crying as a means whereby to attain his purposes. The law he made for himself out of his experience is much more real than the law you laid down in words.

By law, it is plain, we here mean a rule or principle for voluntary action. As experience grows, the child makes rules for himself, part consciously and part unconsciously. They are in general nothing more than his sense of what means to employ to attain some end; but they constitute the first definite shaping of the moral nature within him. There are four great sources from which he derives such rules. We may call them **the natural roots of law:**

(1) *Habit and association*—the experienced connection between some action and its result. "If I want some result, I must do what brought it before," is the principle upon which the child acts, though of course he does not avow it to himself in so many words.

(2) *Imitation*—the observed behavior of others, with its results. "If I want the result they reached, I must do as they did."

(3) *Authority*—the commands and wishes of other persons, enforced by the pleasure or pain of personal relations. "If I want to

please them and avoid the results of their displeasure, I must do as they say."

(4) *Social initiative*—the laws of a social group having common aims and interests. "If I want to share with the rest, I must do my share."

Roughly speaking, the order given is the order of appearance of these roots, and the order in which they reach the culmination of their control. Habit and association are present from the first. Imitation appears the latter half of the first year, and reaches the climax of control from the fourth to the seventh years. Authority appears as soon as the child becomes sensitive to the personal attitudes of others, and its control culminates from six to ten. Social initiative begins whenever the child first feels its helpfulness in a common task or play, and assumes constantly larger control with the coming of adolescence. Of course, none of these roots cease to be productive of laws, nor should they. Habit, imitation and authority continue to the end of life.

3. We may best understand **the development of morality** if we divide these roots of law into two classes. The first three may be called *adaptive roots*, and the last the *initiative root*. Through the first three the child adapts himself to the conditions of his environment, physical and social; through the last, he helps initiate laws as a member of the group which forms them.

(1) *Throughout early and middle childhood, morality develops mainly from the adaptive roots*—habit and association, imitation and authority. The rules of action which the child forms for himself express his sense of the conditions which are imposed upon him from without. His laws are mere statements of natural consequences. An action is good to him just in so far as it brings a pleasurable result, and bad if the result is disagreeable. He has no conception of its real moral quality. He knows no other obligation than that pleasure is desirable and pain and unhappiness to be avoided. He looks upon punishment as simply a particular sort of natural consequence—a way in which those in authority visit upon him their displeasure. He has no idea that it may be for sake of reform or prevention; it is rather natural retribution. Threats and promises mean little to him; it is what *happens*, rather than what you *say* will happen, that shapes his laws and actions. He thinks only of externals—the outward act and its results—not of inward motives. His laws are literal and particular; he is unable to penetrate to the general principles involved.

(2) *In later childhood and adolescence, morality becomes more and*

*more largely a matter of social initiative.* It begins in games with rules and plays that call for team-work. Gangs and clubs are forms of its expression. Lawmaking and law observance are spontaneous and natural under three conditions: (1) There is a social group of some sort of which the boy feels himself to be a member. (2) There is a common end toward which the activity of the group is directed, and for which he with the rest feels responsible. (3) There is a physical material for this activity which makes possible the expression in some concrete way of its results. In other words, if boys get together to do something, and that something is tangible enough for them to see results, they are naturally law-abiding. The rules of the bunch may be but custom; they may be enforced by nothing but public opinion; but each boy feels that they are his own, and will stand by them.

We need not trace out again the development of social initiative. We have done that at length in the chapters upon adolescence. Enough to say that the inward mandate of the newly awakened social sense carries with it an *obligation* that the pressure of external conditions could never make one feel. The laws of this stage are more than mere statements of natural consequence. They tell what ought to be. Life becomes genuinely moral.

4. **The work of the teacher** in moral development is to be thought of in a later chapter. Yet it may be well to note here some immediate practical conclusions. Some of them apply more directly to parents than to us; but we need to understand the whole if we would do well our part.

(1) *Moral training must go along with moral instruction.* What we tell a child about right and wrong has beyond question a great deal to do with his moral development. He has constant need of instruction, "precept upon precept, line upon line." But he is all the time working over his experience into laws and ideas of his own; and these determine the attitude he takes toward our teaching and the way he understands it. Parents and teachers should so manage the conditions of his life that the laws which grow from the natural roots of which we have been thinking, may illumine and enforce their instruction, rather than contradict and weaken it. When there is conflict, the precept generally loses out and the law from life abides.

(2) In early and middle childhood, training must be mainly through the *pressure of external conditions;* in later childhood and adolescence, it must be through *appeal to internal initiative.* This opposition, of course, is not absolute. One cannot draw sharp lines. The

child who is brought up to help and to feel some share of responsibility in the family life will early manifest something of social initiative. The adaptive roots, on the other hand, persist in the later stage of moral development. They are caught up into the higher motive and transformed. Habit and association come to deal with social results. Imitation becomes idealistic. Authority takes the form of public opinion.

(3) *Training upon the adaptive basis requires of us consistency and inflexibility.* We are not to force the child to do right; we are to confront him with such conditions that he will *want* to do right. We must make his environment, physical and social, express just that law and order that we wish him to make a part of himself. The way is plain. Training will begin at birth, with regular habits of eating and sleeping and bathing. We will see to it that good actions without exception bring pleasant results; and bad actions, unpleasant. We will be consistent in our demands upon him and in our attitudes toward him. When we reason with him, it will be simply to explain how certain consequences are bound to follow upon certain actions, not to appeal to principles. If we appeal to higher motives, it will never be as an excuse for transgressing a simpler law, rather as an additional reason for obedience.

Above all, *we will do nothing for sake simply of present discipline.* A six-year-old disappeared one morning this summer, and his parents got out searching parties and dragged the river. At the end of the day he came home alone and asked whether the "census man" had gone yet. His mother had quieted him a few days before by telling him that the census man carried away naughty boys; and he had run away when the enumerator appeared. The one unhappy day is by no means the only or the worst effect of such foolish discipline. We are too prone to think of our own wants, and to do and say anything that will make the child fit in with them. But it all forms a part of the material out of which the child makes his laws. It is *the effect upon him* that we must consider. No bit of discipline should stand alone; it should be a part of a connected and consistent scheme of moral training.

(4) *Training upon the basis of social initiative requires us to share the life of the boy and let him share ours.* Give boys something *real* to do—something in which they feel that you are as vitally interested as they—and work with them toward its accomplishment. They crave fellowship and responsibility. Be a boy with them, and they will become men with you.

There are two difficulties. The first is with the boy. It is the difficulty of making real things seem real. The whole atmosphere of the school seems artificial to him, and remote from his own interests. He does not know his real needs. You will often enough have to throw yourself heartily into some enterprise that seems to you trivial, that you may maintain fellowship and responsibility and in time win him over to more serious things.

The other difficulty is with you. Can you really make yourself one of the boys, and yet be teacher and guide? Are you willing to give enough of yourself? Will you abide by the rules of the bunch? And can you keep from going too far, making yourself silly, and losing their respect?

A minister organized the boys of his church into a secret society which took as its object the study of nature. They soon became eager collectors and dissectors. The minister himself, young, athletic and a good biologist, was their leader. But he spoiled it all by telling the secret to an over-inquisitive mother who one day let it slip from her tongue. The boys thought him a traitor; and he soon closed his work in that community. You ought ask nothing from boys that you are not yourself ready to give. You can never lead them to your virtues if you cannot stand the test of theirs.

### II. RELIGION

5. What we have learned concerning the development of morality will help us to understand the **development of religion.** Matthew Arnold said that religion is but "morality touched with emotion." It is more than that; but it is at least that much. Religion includes morality; and one's moral development has much to do with determining the character of his religion.

> "The thing a man does practically believe (and this is often enough without asserting it even to himself, much less to others); the thing a man does practically lay to heart, and know for certain, concerning his vital relations to this mysterious Universe, and his duty and destiny there, that is in all cases the primary thing for him, and creatively determines all the rest. That is his religion." *

You can find no better definition of religion than this of Carlyle's. One's religion is his sense of the disposition of the universe toward himself and his assumption in turn of an attitude toward it. It in-

* Carlyle: "Heroes and Hero Worship," ch. i.

volves three terms: one's own interests, his sense of the disposition of the universe toward them, and a working plan for the reconciliation of the two.*

This may seem a needlessly complex statement of what religion is. We might have said the same thing in simpler words—that it is one's sense of God's disposition toward him and his answering attitude toward God. The more complex definition is worth using, however, because it makes plain how closely the development of religion is bound up with the development of intellect and will. One's religion becomes different if any one of the three terms be changed—if he gets new interests and ideals, if he arrives at a clearer understanding of the world about him and of the God whose disposition it shows forth, if he conceives a better working-plan for his life. The *whole self*, as a matter of fact, enters into religion. Belief is a matter of intellect, feeling and will. Religion changes as the intellect matures, as feeling deepens and the will gives life direction. It develops with personality. One's religion is always a reflection of what one is. The religion of a child must be different from that of a youth, and the youth's again from that of a man.

This insistence that religion develops with the rest of personality will not be understood as a denial of its instinctive character. Like morality, religion rests upon an *inborn capacity*. God has made us for Himself, as Augustine says, so that we can find no rest save in Him. And like morality and other human instincts, the religious instinct is indefinite and modifiable and must be shaped by experience.

We will not be understood, again, to deny the *supernatural character of religion*. It is true that in prayer man stands face to face with God, and that the Spirit works within us to the salvation of souls. It is true that the Father reveals Himself and His will to the hearts of His children. But revelation depends upon the capacity of the recipient as well as upon the will of the Giver; and the hardened heart may resist even the Spirit of God. There is a law of apperception for spiritual things as well as for material. Jesus spoke often of it, and put it in a parable when He told about the sower.

6. **The religion of early and middle childhood is one of nature and of home.** There are four chief factors which contribute to the development of religion in the life of a child:

(1) *His interest in nature*. His unwearied senses; his eager questions about the causes of things and their purposes; his personifying imagination; his delight in stories of the miraculous and supernatural

* Cf. Perry: "The Approach to Philosophy," p. 87.

—throw his mind open to the conception of God as the Creator and Sustainer of the world about him.

(2) *His credulity and faith.* At first the child accepts without question whatever we tell him of God simply because he believes anything.

> "A little girl was questioning her mother minutely concerning the domestic habits of the angels. Her mother replied that she was sorry she could not answer all the questions, as we really do not know very much about what goes on in heaven. At this the child looked very much astonished, and said, 'Oh, don't you know? Why, cook knows all about it!'" *

As rational curiosity develops and he begins to put things together, he carries out to many a naive and fantastic conclusion the things that he has been told about God.

> Two boys were talking about the rain. J. was giving whatever information he had to W., and finally said, "When the clouds are rent, the rain drops out. *Rent* means *torn*, just as you would tear your clothes." W., after thinking for a time, exclaimed, "I should think God's mother would get tired mending." A little girl was convalescing from typhoid. Her mother was telling her of God's great love; that even the sparrows are included in it. She retorted quietly, "Don't you think God spends too much time on sparrows? If He gave a little more attention to me, possibly I shouldn't have to go for a whole month without a bit of real, solid food." A little girl heard a man in argument use the phrase, "There is not a spot on this footstool," etc. She asked, "What footstool?" Being told that he referred to the earth as the footstool of God, "G-h-h!" she muttered in astonishment. "What long legs!" Her face was perfectly grave; not for a moment did she think of irreverence. The suggested idea was that God must be an exceedingly big man. †

Such interpretations are neither to be feared nor laughed at. They result from the child's attempt to make his ideas coherent, with his literalness and inability to comprehend our figures of speech. We should meet them by a simple explanation of the truth, not by a reiteration of figures or by telling the child that he will understand better when he grows up. Certainly they need not be taken, as they are by Oppenheim, as an argument against giving children any re-

* Drummond: "An Introduction to Child-Study," p. 301.

† Condensed from Oppenheim: "The Development of the Child," p. 136.

ligious ideas. Their reasoning is similarly naïve concerning everyday things. Kirkpatrick tells of a little girl who was promised something at noon. Becoming impatient later, she was told, "Noon is coming soon." "Has noon footies?" she asked. "No." "Well, how does noon come, then?" A little boy asked what made the locomotive go so fast, and received the not precisely true answer that it was the smoke that he saw coming from its stack. "But I don't see any smoke coming from that man's head," he objected a moment later as a bicycle rider whizzed by.

If parents meet the naïve questions of childhood with the simple truth, the child's credulity becomes *faith*. He comes to know whom he can believe. There is a great difference between credulity and faith. The one is mere acceptance because no alternative presents itself; the other is positive trust. Theologians have argued a good deal about the possibility of infant faith. There is one kind of early faith whose reality none can doubt—the faith of a child in its father and mother. The father can do no greater service in the religious development of his child than so to meet the dawning reason that credulity is replaced by perfect faith in himself. We need not worry then about the child's faith in God—the heavenly Father.

(3) *His affection and sensitivity to the personal attitudes of others.* The child's capacity to love and to be loved is of the very heart of religion. To the end of his life, his acquaintance with the God who is Love will be influenced by the response which his affections meet in these early days. His conception of God as Father and of himself as God's child will reflect the life of the home.

(4) *His imitation and suggestibility.* "If anyone should ask me," says Bishop McCabe, "what most impressed me in my boyhood days, I would answer, The sight of my father coming out from the secret place of prayer every day at noon." * The child's impressionable nature gains much that he does not understand, and that we ought not try to make him understand until he seeks to know. A child has no business to have a religious "experience." But our own reverent worship, the prayers and songs of God's house, its solemn sacraments, its music, its beautiful windows and stately architecture—most of all, the quiet devotion of the family altar—all these enter into the very making of his soul.

So we see the justification of our brief characterization of the religion of childhood: it is a religion of *nature* and of *home*. The child's interest centers in the great world that lies open to his senses,

* Pattee: "Elements of Religious Pedagogy," p. 149.

and he seeks its Maker. But the positive content of his religion comes from the home. It is what father and mother make it. God enters his life because He first dwells in theirs. God lets them for a little while stand in His place. His trust and the child's alike rest in them.

7. **The religion of later childhood is one of life and law in life.** The boy's interest is in *God's dealings with men* rather than in His works in nature.

(1) The social instincts bring a *new sense of law*. Conscience awakens. Right is conceived, no longer as from an external authority, but as resting upon inward grounds of obligation.

(2) The development of the *historical sense* begets a new interest in life as revealed in biography and history. It is the time, we remember, of hero-worship. Tales of the mighty doings of great men are eagerly sought and read.

(3) The religion of the period, therefore, centers about *God as revealing Himself to men*. The boy thinks of God the Law-giver and Redeemer, rather than God the Creator. His is a God of Right and of Might, who moves in human history and accomplishes His will through the lives of the great heroes of faith.

(4) We may remind ourselves of three things that make this period especially significant in religious education: its plasticity to *habit*, its quick and retentive *memory*, and the fact that life's *decision time* comes at its close.

8. **In adolescence religion becomes personal.** In later as well as in early childhood, interest in religion is objective. The child learns *about* God, His works and His life with men. But now religion comes home to the will. It presents itself as a *way of life*, to be accepted or rejected. God claims the soul that is His.

We have already thought of the characteristics of adolescent religion; and we shall discuss its problems in a coming chapter which will treat of the spiritual goal of our work. We need here only to remind ourselves of the three great periods of religious awakening:

(1) *Decision at twelve or thirteen is usually the natural result of a normal religious nurture and of social suggestion.* The Lutheran Church, with its ideals of education in religion, its belief that baptized children are members of the church, and its rite of confirmation, does well to center its attention here. Its great problem is to care for the spiritual activity and further development in grace of those who have been confirmed.

(2) *Conversions at sixteen and seventeen are more apt to be of the*

*emotional type*. There is a conflict of impulses and feelings, with a final triumph of those that lead to God. There wells up something within that breaks down the barrier of selfishness, indifference or distrust.

(3) *Conversions at nineteen or twenty are apt to be of a more intellectual and practical type*. It is because new insight has come, or some doubt has been resolved; or because the youth reaches the practical conviction that he needs religion as part of life's equipment.

## QUESTIONS

1. Is conscience an intuitive and infallible guide? Give reasons for your answer. Explain the instinctive character of the moral nature.

2. In what sense is the child himself a natural lawmaker and law-observer?

3. What are the natural roots of law in a child's life? Distinguish the adaptive roots from the initiative root.

4. What is the character of the child's moral development throughout early and middle childhood? What change takes place in later childhood?

5. Discuss the work of the teacher in the moral development of the pupil.

6. What is religion? Show how the whole self enters into religion and how it develops with personality.

7. Characterize the religion of early and middle childhood. Discuss those factors in a child's life which contribute most to the development of religion within him.

8. Children often get naïve and fantastic ideas about God, and it has been argued from this that we ought not to teach religion until later childhood or adolescence. Is the argument sound? Give careful reasons for your answer.

9. Characterize the religion of later childhood.

10. What change in religious development comes with adolescence? What is apt to be the character of a conversion in each of the three great periods of religious awakening?

# PART TWO

# THE TEACHER

# PART II.—THE TEACHER

## LESSON XII

### Grades

We have finished our study of The Pupil, and turn now to the work of The Teacher—its principles and methods.

1. It is first of all essential that we lay fast hold upon the conviction that **the Sunday school is a school.** It is not a prayer-meeting or a social or philanthropic organization; it is not the "children's church." Its work is educational. It is a place of instruction. We are put here to *teach;* the pupils to *learn.* Our sessions center about the lesson.

There will be devotion, of course; but we do not meet for sake of worship. There will be giving; but we are not organized to raise and bestow money. There will be social fellowship; but the Sunday school is not a club. These things have place in our work just because they, too, are educational. As training, they supplement instruction, and are essential factors in the spiritual development of those we teach. But they are means to an end; and they are subordinate to the chief means which the Sunday school employs—*definite instruction in the Bible.*

> "Such a conception of the work of the Sunday school recognizes the peculiar relation of our religion to the Bible, and the necessity that underneath worship and devotion, ethical instruction and the persuasion of the will, missions and philanthropy, there shall be a firm foundation of knowledge of that pre-eminent revelation of God which is the source and support of Christianity. It recognizes the need of one service, which, having the same ultimate aim as that which is sought in all the activities of the church, shall seek that end specifically and mainly by instruction in the Bible."*

2. **The Bible is the chief text-book of the Sunday school.** It is God's Word—the record of His life with men and His revelation of Himself to them. It is more than history; it is a divine interpretation of history. Its poetry and prophecy breathe the Spirit of the living God; its letters of counsel and comfort were written by men who were moved from on high. It shows us Jesus, "the Way, the

* Burton and Mathews: "Principles and Ideals for the Sunday School," p. 6.

"Truth and the Life." For a score of centuries, men of every nation have found in it inspiration and help, strength and peace. There is no other such book.

Two misconceptions of the Bible's pre-eminence are possible, which we must be careful to avoid:

(1) *The Bible is not the sole text-book of the Sunday school.* You need *helps* for its interpretation—the best that scholarship can afford. There is no class more barren than one that accepts too literally the well-meant but misleading statement that "the Bible is its own best commentary." You must supplement its teaching, again, with lessons drawn from *human life*, and, especially in the lower grades, from God's other book of *nature*. There should be definite lessons and courses in *applied Christianity*—in missions and in social betterment. Catechetical instruction in the *history and doctrines of the Church* should be a part of the organized work of the Sunday school, not something extraneous to it. There should be a *normal course*, fitting young people to become teachers.

(2) *The fact that the Bible is God's Word does not relieve us from using our minds to understand it.* It is no magic book, with a message that miraculously imprints itself upon idle souls. It is true that spiritual truth must be spiritually discerned. Yet the Bible is to be understood as is any other book—by earnest and patient study in light of historical conditions and literary form. It calls for the best that there is within us—for reason as well as for heart and will. God never contradicts Himself. His miracles do not abolish the natural laws which He has ordained, but use them for higher ends. The Spirit does not do away with human reason, but gives to it a higher light and power. The laws of the mind abide. We shall understand the Bible just in so far as we use the powers which God has given us to understand anything, and so make ready for the Spirit's enlightenment. We shall teach the Bible rightly just in so far as we follow those principles which the nature of the mind itself sets for the teaching of any subject. The spiritual nature crowns and completes the intellectual and the moral; it is no substitute for them.

3. **Four fundamental principles** underlie all teaching. They are implied in what we have learned concerning the development of personality. We need only bring them together here, and give them definite statement.

(1) *The principle of* **self-activity.** Not what you tell a pupil, but what he thinks as the result of your words; not what you do for him, but what he does for himself; not the impression, but his reaction

upon it—determine his development. You cannot put ideas into his head; your words are but symbols of the ideas that are within your own. He must interpret the symbols and from them construct his own ideas. *Teaching succeeds only in so far as it enlists the activity of the pupil.* He must think for himself. It is your business to wake him to thought, to engage his interest, to get him to want ideas, and to set before him the material out of which he can make them.

(2) *The principle of* **apperception.** The pupil never makes an idea wholly of new material. He understands the new only by relating it to the old. The body of any new idea, therefore, is old; it is made of material that has come from his own experience, reshaped and altered only enough to take in the new item. The pupil's instincts, his habits, his old ideas determine the very meaning for him of any new impression. If you do not know what they are, you cannot be sure that he is getting the meaning you intend.* *The teacher must present the truth in terms drawn from the pupil's own knowledge and experience.*

(3) *The principle of* **adaptation.** The pupil is growing and developing. As life goes on, experience widens, powers mature, instincts ripen and petrify into habits, interests come and go. We remember Professor James' striking statement of these facts, quoted in a former chapter, and his conclusion that "in all pedagogy the great thing is to strike the iron while hot, and to seize the wave of the pupil's interest in each successive subject before its ebb has come." *Teaching must appeal to what is within the pupil; its matter and its method, therefore, must constantly be adapted to his changing powers and interests.*

(4) *The principle of* **organization.** No bit of teaching, whether that of an hour, a day or a year, should stand alone. It must be coupled up with what went before and what comes after—and it must be coupled up, remember, in the pupil's mind, not simply in our own. Further, the teaching as a whole must head up into something; it must have a goal and work steadily toward it. The one-sidedness of the principle of adaptation is here corrected. We must do more than simply feed the changing interests; we must feed them to some purpose. The goal of education cannot be left to the child's spontaneous instincts, however largely they determine its matter and method at

* Dr. McKinney tells the story of a boy who seemed repelled by the thought of God's fatherhood. The teacher was much puzzled until he called one day at the boy's home, to find out that the father had kept him and his mother out in the cold the whole of the previous night, threatening in his drunken frenzy to kill them.—"Bible School Pedagogy," p. 60.

any particular stage. *Teaching aims at an organization of ideas and powers within the pupil; and it must work toward this in an orderly and consistent way.*

4. **If we are to follow these principles the Sunday school must be graded.** "One of the chief problems before the Sunday school to-day is how to make of it a real school."* In late years, this problem has centered definitely about the question of a *graded curriculum.*

Practically all Sunday schools have recognized the principle of grading in *organization* and *method.* They have at least separated the "infant school" from the "adult school," and, though both schools have had the same lesson, have made some attempt to suit the method of teaching to the maturity of the pupil. From this simple beginning there have developed graded organizations of all degrees of elaborateness, with a corresponding differentiation of methods.

The great question has been: *Should the lessons themselves be graded?* The plan of uniform lessons, adopted in 1872 by what then became the International Sunday School Association, did not recognize this principle. The lessons were uniform in two senses. The material to be taught was the same (1) for every class in the school, as well as (2) for every school cooperating in what soon became a world-wide movement. *Uniformity between schools* is eminently desirable. It means practical cooperation in the enlistment of resources that single schools could not begin to command. We owe to this cooperation the present development of the Sunday school. *Uniformity between classes* was once desirable for the same reason. But with the widening of resources and the growth of educational ideals in late years, its value has come more and more to be called in question.

*The advantages of uniformity between classes* cannot be better stated than they have been by Burton and Mathews:

> "It secures unity in the school, enabling the teachers to cooperate in the study of the lesson, and giving the superintendent an opportunity to direct and stimulate the work of instruction throughout the school. It secures unity in the home, making it possible for the father or the mother to assist and guide in the study of the lesson at home by the whole family from youngest to oldest, and facilitating the association of family prayer with the study of the Bible in the Sunday school. It immensely facilitates the preparation and publication of helps

* Coe: "Education in Religion and Morals," p. 287.

on the part of religious papers and in the form of quarterlies and lesson papers. It enlists on the side of Bible study in the Sunday school an immense capital of brains and money. It appeals powerfully to sentiment, and secures the help of that important ally. The superintendent and teacher in every city and hamlet in the land, the parent in every home, even the child himself, feels, or may feel, the stimulus and inspiration of the fact that the prayerful thought of the Christian world is turning with him to the portion of Scripture assigned for a certain Sunday's study." *

*The chief disadvantages of such uniformity* are:

(1) *The lessons are not adapted to the pupil.* The principle of adaptation applies to matter as well as to method. We have seen how the religion of early childhood differs from that of later childhood, and it again from that of adolescence. Shall we attempt to teach the same doctrines, or the same portions of the Bible, to pupils in such widely different stages of development? A little child cannot understand the messages of the prophets or the spiritual insight of John. You have doubtless experienced the difficulty of trying to teach children under eight or nine such matters as Isaiah's conception of the Messiah, the temptation of Jesus, the parable of the unjust steward, Thomas' doubt, or Paul's doctrine of justification by faith.

Such was not God's own way of teaching. The Bible contains the record of His education of the human race. Its parts are not all alike. It is a progressive revelation. He taught simple lessons to the race in its childhood, and only in the "fullness of time," when the experience of thousands of years had made men ready to understand, did He show Himself to them in the life of Jesus.

"The Bible, on the whole, is pedagogical in its general arrangement. . . . In the Old Testament the wonder and folk stories, the creation and nature stories, come first. These appeal to the little child under six. Farther along are the law and order books, the spectacular scenes of Egypt, the Red Sea, Sinai, Marah, Nebo and the like. Then come the historical, military, patriotic, then the prophetic and reformatory, with an occasional glimpse of the utopian world in the future. That is all pedagogical. So also is the New Testament. The doctrinal part is near the close where it belongs in any proper course of study for the school." †

* "Principles and Ideals for the Sunday School," p. 128.

† Haslett: "The Pedagogical Bible School," p. 55. I have hesitated to use this

(2) *In the mind of the pupil, the system contains no principle of progression.* He does not feel himself advancing from year to year. He knows that, however thoroughly he may study and however rapidly be promoted from class to class, he will still have set for him the same lesson as every other pupil in the school. There is no incentive in the thought. There seems to be no tangible result; he does not feel that he is getting anywhere.

This lack of progression results often in a dulled interest as the pupil approaches the lessons of later years. He enters Sunday school, let us say, at four; then by eleven he has covered about the whole Bible, in so far as the Sunday school ever gives him a chance at the whole. Just at the time of life when his interest in religion and in the Bible should be most fresh and vigorous, he begins again the round of lessons. What if the passages are somewhat different and the titles new? He is bound to feel that he is learning again something that he already knows. "One of the most real difficulties in the Sunday school," says Forbush, "is the fact that to the boy the Bible is trite. It is hard to find a boy who does not know as much about the Bible as he wants to." * College teachers of Biblical literature have to combat an inertia caused by the student's tacit assumption that he has not much to learn about the familiar old Book. The uniform Sunday school lessons may lead to a premature sophistication which deadens the interest of adolescence. The youth does not revise his childish conceptions of religious doctrines, and the man becomes a weakling or a doubter.

(3) *Such a curriculum has no connection with the rest of the pupil's education.* Religion is worthless if kept apart from life. Yet we educate our children as though we aimed at their separation. The public schools give religion no recognition; the Sunday school teaches the same lesson to the high school senior as to the child in the first grade. Then we try to put together by exhortation what by education we have torn asunder.

(4) *The lessons fail to give a connected view of the Bible in its wholeness and in the onward sweep of its progressive revelation.* The Bible is not a collection of dogmas or of proof-texts, in all its parts

quotation, or to refer at all to God's method of teaching the race, because I attach little value to the "recapitulation theory" which colors so much of Haslett's thought. Our point is not that the child does, or ought to, pass through all the stages of religious life that the race has passed through, and in the same order; but simply that God Himself fitted the content of His teaching to the capacity of His pupils.

* "The Boy Problem," p. 110.

of equal value. Neither is it a body of writings and records, each of which carries its own moral and spiritual message independently of the rest. It is the record of a great religious experience—the religious experience of a nation taught by God Himself, yet learning slowly and with many mistakes. It culminates in the life and teachings of Jesus, in whom dwelt "all the fullness of the Godhead bodily." We fail to grasp God's revelation if we take it text for text, or incident for incident, and seek in each some spiritual truth. The parts have meaning only in light of the whole. "The law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ."

The International Committee has sought earnestly to realize this principle in its choice of lessons; yet in practical effect the lessons have lent themselves to a split-up mode of interpretation. There is question whether a system of uniform lessons can ever avoid this tendency, in view of the necessity of choosing passages which can convey some truth to the mind of every pupil. Certainly a graded course can more definitely compel the assumption of the historical point of view.

(5) *A uniform curriculum takes no account of the critical periods in the spiritual development of the pupil.* Adolescence has its special needs. The lessons should be such as to win a consecration of the life.

5. **The International Graded Lessons,** authorized by the Convention at Louisville in 1908, are proving to be the practical solution of the problem. Carefully prepared by teachers of long experience, they accord with the principles of teaching set forth above, and definitely fulfill the requirements which the uniform lessons failed to meet. They combine all the advantages of uniformity and cooperation between schools with none of the disadvantages of uniformity between classes.

Those who have used these lessons have found the pros and cons of this chapter so much ancient history. If your experience has been that of most schools, you will never go back to the uniform lessons. You need no discussion of the work of the various departments. It is already familiar to you; and you can find no sounder and more practical methods than those given in your teacher's text-book.

Those who have not yet used these lessons face no more serious issue than that of whether or not to take them up. A few practical suggestions may help you:

(1) *You ought to know what the graded course is like.* Send for a text-book of the grade you are interested in, and find out. If you get

the first book of the year, it will be worth a great deal just for the practical suggestions it contains as to methods of teaching.

(2) *Do not be afraid of the seeming complexity of a graded course.* It is flexible. You may make it as elaborate as you please. Begin easily, with just one grade in each department. For that matter, you need not have departments at all if you do not wish. Simply have separate classes, each studying the course best adapted to the development of its members.

(3) *Do not be afraid of physical conditions.* Ideally, a graded course calls for the complete separation of departments, each having its own room and its own opening and closing services as well as its own lessons. Practically, the best you have will do; and you can handle the course even if your whole Sunday school must meet in one room, and that the auditorium of the church.

(4) *Do not be afraid of the pupils*—that they will not like the stricter work, or the separation into grades. The added interest of the lessons will make up for that. If you find it difficult to begin the grading, follow that of the public schools.

(5) *Do not be afraid of yourself.* You will no longer be able to read comments on the lesson in every paper, or to study it at a weekly meeting of all the teachers of your school. You will have to stand more squarely upon your own feet. But the teacher's text-books give definite and wise guidance for every lesson, and you, as well as the pupil, will feel the stimulus of a new interest. Moreover, you will stay within the same grade, or at least the same department; and that means that you will get a better mastery each year of both lesson material and methods. You can meet each week with the teachers of your grade in other Sunday schools, just as you used to meet with the teachers of your own school, to study the lesson and to help one another by an exchange of experience.

6. **Whether your school adopts graded lessons or not, its aims and methods must be graded.** You must strive, in so far as you can, to teach according to the principles of self-activity, apperception, adaptation and organization.

*The fundamental aim* of every Sunday school class is the same—the moral and spiritual development of the pupil. We seek to bring those we teach to a knowledge of God as revealed in Jesus Christ, and to loyal, whole-hearted service in His kingdom. But this general aim can be realized only in so far as we meet the particular interests and needs of the pupil at each stage of his development. Each department of the Sunday school, therefore, will have *its specific aim.*

(1) The *Beginners* are getting their first acquaintance with God as the loving Father. The child's life in the home and the eager reaching out of his senses toward nature about him, form the apperceptive basis upon which we must build.

(2) The meaning which the *Primary* pupil gets out of the stories we tell him is determined by the new ideas he is gaining in public school and by the distinction he is coming to make between the world of fact and that of the imagination. We must seek to coordinate our teaching with that of the school, and so to present the simple truths about God, His works in nature and His dealings with men, that the child may feel them to have a place in the world of fact.

(3) The *Junior* apperceives the truth in light of his social instincts and his hero-worship. Our teaching must center about the moral life, as commanded in God's law and revealed in the person of Jesus and in the heroes of the faith. We seek to present the ideal of moral heroism, to deepen the sense of responsibility for the right, and to give a vision of the glory of service.

(4) The work of the Sunday school centers about the *Intermediate* department. It is the decision time. We shall bend all our energies, first to secure a consecration of heart and will to God's service, then to help the pupil carry out his decision in actual living and doing.*

(5) Our aim in the *Senior* department is (*a*) to meet the doubts and intellectual difficulties which are often characteristic of later adolescence; (*b*) to help the pupil clear up his moral and religious conceptions and formulate his beliefs; (*c*) to train for definite and specific service. The work of the department should be in large part elective; and the courses will include both some of a predominantly intellectual character and others more definitely practical. The normal course should begin in this department. We shall seek earnestly for the conversion of those who have not yet dedicated themselves to God.

(6) We have said nothing thus far about the men and women of the

* It is very unfortunate that the International Lessons have saddled this department with so meaningless and inappropriate a name as "Intermediate." It is not intermediate, but central; and we should do everything to make the pupil feel it to be such. The term, furthermore, has often been applied to the department below this; and this has been called the Junior. An adolescent dislikes anything that savors of childishness. He feels himself reaching out toward maturity. It would be far better to give the department a name that would convey some impression of its importance and appeal to this sense of life's expansion. The term "Secondary" would do; but it would, perhaps, be better frankly to call it the "High School" of the church.

*Advanced* department. We shall deal with some of the problems of the department in a later chapter. Enough here to say that its courses should be wholly elective, and largely of a practical character. The advanced students should get what they want and what they need. No one ought ever graduate from the Sunday school. We all need it for sake of the spiritual nourishment of stated Bible study, and for maintenance of the intellectual vigor of our faith. More than this, the Advanced department has wonderful possibilities as a *school of practical religion*. A well-conducted class for mothers will help solve many problems respecting the children, as well as give to the mothers themselves a new inspiration. A class for men in social and civic problems may help toward better conditions in your city, as well as make religion vital to the men themselves.

## QUESTIONS

1. Why is instruction in the Bible the chief work of the Sunday school? From what other sources than the Bible may it draw material for instruction?

2. Explain the four principles of teaching brought out in this lesson —self-activity, apperception, adaptation and organization.

3. State the chief advantages of a system of ungraded and uniform lessons.

4. What are the chief disadvantages of such a system? Give a careful statement of reasons for each.

5. What is the specific aim of each department of the Sunday school? Show how this aim depends upon the interests and needs of the pupil in each stage of development.

## LESSON XIII

### Methods of Teaching

The teacher must do more than study his lesson; he must plan definitely just *how to teach it.* You cannot know your subject too thoroughly. It is the primary requisite of good teaching. But it will not insure good teaching. You must know *how*, as well as *what* to teach.

We are often misled by the ease and spontaneity of a great preacher who uses no notes, or of a teacher who inspires us with his own vision of the truth. We suppose that they need not prepare in the painstaking way that we must. We wish that we had their genius. But the secret of genius, it has been well said, is hard work. Many hours of mental travail lie back of that clear-cut, inspiring sermon; the perfect mastery of a plan gives surety of movement to the thought of the teacher. We hear sometimes of "born teachers." They are few; and those few love their work too much ever to attempt it without preparation. The moment one begins to think of himself as a born teacher, he is in danger of losing his birthright.

There is no one method for Sunday school teaching. Methods are means to an end. They depend upon the nature of the pupil, upon the subject to be taught, upon the material conditions which the teacher faces and the resources at his command. Each Sunday presents its specific problem. You must fit your method to conditions; it is your solution of the problem of the day.

In this chapter we shall think of the general methods of conducting a class. We shall consider the more important advantages and difficulties of each, and the grade of pupils to which it is best adapted.

1. **Story-telling.** Whether it deal with fact or fancy, a story is a work of the imagination. It makes the truth live. It makes us see the things it tells, and stirs our hearts to feel and our wills to act. "Of all the things that a teacher should know how to do," says President Hall, "the most important, without exception, is to be able to tell a story."

There are three ways in which we may use the story:

(1) As *presentation.* The lesson itself may be cast into story form. This is essential in the two lower departments; and there the telling

of the story is the central work of the hour. In the higher departments, too, it is sometimes well to present the lesson as a story if it is full of dramatic action.

(2) As *preparation.* A story may be very effectively used to lead up to the lesson—some bit of everyday experience, perhaps, that will arouse interest in the subject to be presented; or a review of previous lessons in quick, vivid narration; or the tale of what happened between the events of the last lesson and those of this.

(3) As *illustration.* The teacher needs no power more than that of conceiving analogies—seeing what the truth is *like*, and presenting it in terms of its likeness. That is what Jesus did. He was always telling stories. He taught in concrete pictures that brought home the truth to the simplest mind. "Without a parable spake He not unto them."

2. **The recitation method** involves three steps: (1) assignment of the lesson; (2) the pupil's study; (3) the recitation itself. It enlists the cooperation of teacher and pupil. Each must do his part. The pupil must study and recite; the teacher must assign the lesson and conduct the recitation. Most Sunday school classes are conducted ostensibly in accordance with this method. In comparatively few, however, is it really carried out. It makes much greater demands upon both teacher and pupil than we are wont to think.

Some of us may have had the fortune to be in a class where the teacher asked only the questions printed in the lesson leaf. They went something like this: "Where did Peter and John go at the ninth hour? (v. 1). What time was this? (see notes). Why did they go? Whom did they see there? (v. 2). How long had he been lame? What did he ask of them? (v. 3). What did Peter say? (v. 4). What did the lame man expect? (v. 5). What did Peter then say? (v. 6). What then? (v. 7). What did the lame man do? (v. 8)." The teacher put these questions to the members of the class in turn; and each answered by reading the passage indicated.

That was not a recitation at all. It was simply nibbling at a few predigested Bible verses. Neither the teacher nor the pupils *did* anything except look at the page and open their mouths. There was no *thinking* going on. There had been no *study* on the part of the pupils; and there was no evidence of it on the part of the teacher.

Our example is purposely somewhat extreme. No lesson leaf would ask quite such feeble questions, or indicate so precisely the answer to every one. No teacher of any common sense would do nothing more than read off for answer such a list. *But most pupils will, if they get*

*a chance, do exactly what those pupils did.* So long as their lesson leaves are open at all, they will "look up" the answer to any question addressed to them, and read it, either from the verses of the lesson or from the editor's notes. Now and then a pupil is to be found who will put on an air of knowledge by paraphrasing the answer he finds in the book; but most of them are not ashamed frankly to read it.

Now, it may be quite legitimate for pupils to do this, but *it is not reciting.* The recitation method holds the pupil responsible for some definite piece of work, which he is to do outside of the recitation period, and upon which he is to report in class. It demands that he study.

It exacts yet more of you—the teacher. It makes you study two lessons for every Sunday—that upon which the class recites and that which you assign for the coming week. It makes you divide the teaching period into two parts—one devoted to the recitation and one to the assignment of the next lesson. It confronts you, moreover, with two practical difficulties:

(1) *How shall you get the pupil to study?* That is a hard problem, and one upon which any teacher of experience speaks with becoming humility. (*a*) *You should show him how to study.* Public school teachers are just finding out that it pays to take stated periods to study with their children and to teach them how to go at their lessons. (*b*) *Your assignment of the lesson for the coming Sunday should be such as to arouse his interest and give him a motive for study.* It should make him feel that the lesson contains something that he wants to know. (*c*) *You should assign a definite task to each pupil, for which you will hold him responsible.* It is not enough to say that you expect each to study the lesson, or to answer the questions of the text-book, or to do whatever writing or picture-pasting or map-drawing it requires. There must be some special bit of work for each, the results of which he is to bring back to class the next Sunday. The fact that you have the work so outlined makes him feel that you are really interested in the lesson, and he is ready to help you. His doing that bit of work, then, gives a motive that generally leads him to do the work that all are to do. (*d*) *Above all, never assign anything that you will not call for at the next period; never fail to call for and use everything assigned.* This is a rule that will often be hard to live up to; but you must hold to it as rigidly as you can. It is the one that clinches all the rest. Laxity here takes vitality out of the pupil's work, and soon begets carelessness and indifference.

(2) *How shall you retain the attention and interest of the pupil throughout the recitation?* It is quite possible that your very success in getting the pupil to study may be your undoing in the recitation period. If you do nothing more than hear a recitation, testing knowledge and receiving reports on tasks assigned, the period will be very monotonous and dry to the pupil—and more so the more thoroughly he has studied the lesson. This becomes more certain as pupils grow older. It is a frequent complaint of college students that "Professor So-and-so gives you nothing more than is in the text-book." The pupil must feel that he is getting something out of the recitation period itself.

Testing, therefore, is only the beginning of your work in the recitation. *You must be able to use the pupils' answers and reports in a further development of the lesson.* You must be able to explain, illustrate, amplify, and finally sum up the results of their work and your own. *The ideal recitation is in fact cooperative.* All have studied a common assignment which becomes the basis of discussion. To that discussion each pupil brings in his special contribution, the bit of research or of memory work that was assigned to him, and for which he alone is responsible. The teacher, too, makes his contribution to the common store, and with tact and ingenuity weaves together what all have brought into a unified development of the truth. At the end the pupils *know* the truth, for they have themselves seen it grow in the discussion of the hour; and they feel that it is *their own*, for each has had his share in its development. The recitation has been *social;* the pupils feel the glow of helpfulness, and go home with an added zest to prepare to do their part on the coming Sunday.

Ideal! Impracticable! some of you are doubtless saying to yourselves. Such a conception of the recitation *is* ideal; but it is *not* impracticable. The thing has been done. Classes in many schools are now working in this cooperative way, and are getting results. You can realize this ideal if you will but put your whole heart into it, and *take the time it demands.* For it does demand work on the part of the teacher. Success depends primarily on two things: the care with which you *plan the lesson before you assign it*, and the *tact* with which you make inadequate and even partly false answers contribute to the working out of your plan. It takes patience, foresight and ingenuity; but it is worth the while.

Two remarks must be added. The first is that the degree to which such a social conception of the recitation can be realized depends upon the age of the pupils. It cannot be used in the beginners'

department, and not much in the primary; but we have already seen that story-telling is the essential method of these departments. But it will work well with the juniors, and better throughout adolescence. The other is that it must by this time have become perfectly plain that *the ideal recitation is no mere recitation at all, but rather a discussion which uses the results of preliminary assignments, and of which reciting is therefore a part.* This leads us to the consideration of the next method.

3. **The discussion method** develops the lesson within the class period. By skillful questions, the teacher sets the pupil to thinking and gets him to express his thought, then uses it as a basis for further question and discussion. The truth of the lesson is thus gradually educed. The teacher draws the pupil out. The work of the hour is constructive and, in the primary sense of the word, educative.*

The great virtue of the method is its live and cooperative character. There is nothing mechanical or rigid about it. Things keep moving. It demands the activity both of teacher and pupil. The class goes away with no ready-made information loosely lodged in their heads, but with ideas of their own making.

But this method, too, has its difficulties and dangers:

(1) *It is a mistake to attempt to educe particular facts by discussion.* You must tell them to the pupil, or he must find them out somewhere.

Socrates' method of questioning and discussion has long been pointed to as an ideal. It is true that he was a master at stirring his hearers to think for themselves. We can learn much from him and his questions. But there is a great difference of presupposition between Socrates' method and our own. He believed that all truth dwelt within the soul of the pupil himself. He held that knowledge is in reality *recollection.* He thought that the human soul had lived before coming to this earth, just as it will live hereafter; and that the truths known in that former existence had left their print upon it. Truth lies, therefore, implicit within one; to know is but to become clearly conscious of one's own latent memories. The duty of the teacher is to help bring them to the light. By questioning and discussion he makes the pupil think, not only for himself, but upon that which is within himself. Socrates meant far more by the maxim, "Know thyself," than we do when we quote it.

We do not believe in this doctrine. Facts, we now know, come to us from without. Men might have peered forever into their own

* The word "educate" comes from the Latin "educo," which was derived from "e," meaning "out," and "duco," meaning "to lead."

souls and might have discussed with one another until doomsday, without ever learning the simple fact that salt is made of sodium and chlorine. Someone had to observe that. You can never by questioning get out of a pupil the fact that Peter was a fisherman, or that Paul was born at Tarsus, unless that fact has first been put into him.

You waste time, then, in attempting to pull facts out of the class that they do not know, or to create such knowledge by discussion. *The province of the method is the organization of facts.* You are to make the pupil think about the facts of the lesson, relate them to one another, draw inferences from them and arrive at new truths. But the facts themselves he must find out, either in his previous study, or by looking them up as you ask for them, or by having others tell him. Any other method than previous study, moreover, is poor economy. Every pupil should come with the main facts of the lesson already fixed in his mind. You will rapidly question the class upon them; and then you have a common basis upon which discussion may proceed. You are ready to go on, to inquire into matters that have escaped notice, to round out the pupil's knowledge and to develop the truth of the lesson.

(2) *There is danger that the pupils will not study.* The discussion method *can* get along without previous preparation on their part. Each can look up his facts in the text-book as the lesson proceeds, or catch them from the answers of someone else. But the result is that the pupils make no real contribution to the discussion, and lack the basis of knowledge which they need to comprehend its more vital truths. The discussion is bound to degenerate. The class flits about on the surface of the passage for the day; and the teacher is driven to catch-penny devices of entertainment.

(3) *There is danger of wandering from the point*—this even if the pupils do study. Answers that are not quite right will throw you off the track; questions will be raised about remote and minor issues; or some suggestive remark will entice you to spend too much time in its development. It is hard to keep perspective. Everything seems important at the time. In teaching a class, as in writing a book, the biggest problem is to know what to keep out. You must have a plan well thought out before. You will have to adapt it, of course, to the exigencies of the discussion. You may even have to leave it. But it will at least give you a sense of direction and proportion.

4. The best method is, therefore, a combination of recitation and discussion. We may call it **the cooperative method,** for it alone

deserves the name. No recitation is genuinely social unless the results of previous study are used in live discussion. No discussion is really cooperative unless the pupil is prepared to do his part; and this is insured only by definite assignment.

The essential characteristics of this method are implied in what we have said concerning recitation and discussion. We may sum them up briefly:

(1) *The teacher keeps a week ahead of the class.* He studies, not only the lesson for the coming Sunday, but the lesson which he is then to assign for the next. He blocks out carefully the course which its discussion is to take, and finds a definite piece of work for each pupil.

(2) After the main teaching period, *he devotes a second period of five or ten minutes to the assignment for the next Sunday.* It is a task that demands his best efforts. The way that he uses these minutes determines the way in which the pupils will study throughout the week. The teaching of the lesson begins right here. This is the introduction. It must tell enough of what is coming to make the pupil want to know more, and to set him to work intelligently. Simply to say, "Next Sunday we will study about so-and-so," is no assignment at all.

(3) On the next Sunday, *he develops the lesson by a discussion, in the course of which each pupil gets called upon, in one way or another, for the results of his work.* The union of recitation and discussion is organic, not mechanical. The pupil's reports are made a vital part of the development of the lesson.

(4) *The motive of the hour is social.* The method is adapted to pupils, therefore, who have reached the age of social initiative—those of the junior and higher departments.

(5) *The method may be adapted to the development of the pupils by changing the character of the assignments.* In the lower grades only bits of memory work can be assigned for home study; then definite questions whose answers are to be written out, and manual work to be done. In higher grades questions will be assigned for oral, rather than written answer; then topics may gradually be substituted for questions. The topical method of assignment finally may be adapted to the maturity of any class, by broadening the topics and making them demand more research.

5. With adult pupils who are intellectually mature, **the research method** is best. The teacher becomes simply the leader of a group of students who are together pursuing an investigation. A topic is

assigned to each pupil, upon which he is to find out all he can and bring back a report to the class. If the subject be the social teachings of Jesus, the pupil is not given a text-book wherein they are all set down in order, ready for him to learn in the shortest possible time, neither is he told them by means of a lecture or discussion. He is rather assigned a given topic and sent to the gospels to find out for himself just what Jesus said about it, then to the histories and commentaries to learn what were the social conditions of Jesus' time with respect to it. He comes back to the class with the facts he has discovered and with the conclusions he draws from them, and himself leads the discussion on his topic. It is clear that this is simply *the cooperative method carried to its highest development.* Not nearly all adult classes can use it, however. It demands an exceptionally strong and well-equipped teacher; and it can be used only with pupils who have the intellectual ability to do such research work and are willing to take the time for it.

6. In **the lecture method** the teacher does all the talking. Its virtues are: (1) its definite and systematic presentation of the lesson; (2) its economy of time; (3) its attractiveness to many busy men and women who do not have the time or, more often, the inclination to study a lesson for themselves. Its weakness is, of course, the fact that the teacher does all the work and there is little or no study by the pupil. It is an excellent method with advanced classes, *if you cannot get them to work in a better way.* It demands the very best of teachers, and one who is a direct and resourceful public speaker. Such a teacher may attract large numbers of men and women to the Sunday school who would not enter any other class.

7. **Drill lessons** and **review lessons** have a place in the work of the Sunday school, and methods of their own. We shall think of them in a later chapter.

## QUESTIONS

1. Why is there no one method of teaching that one may always follow?

2. In what ways may a teacher use a story?

3. What are the steps involved in the recitation method? With what difficulties does it confront you?

4. How shall you go to work to get the pupil to study?

5. How shall you endeavor to retain the attention and interest of the pupil throughout the recitation period?

6. What are the difficulties and dangers of the discussion method?

7. Describe carefully the cooperative method, and show how it may be adapted to the maturity of the pupil.

8. Describe the research method. What are its advantages and its difficulties?

9. What are the advantages of the lecture method? What its disadvantages?

10. What do you consider the best method in general for each department of the Sunday school? Give reasons for your choice.

## LESSON XIV

### The Plan of the Lesson

The discussion of methods has made plain how much depends upon the teacher's own preparation of the lesson. He must do more than master it for himself; he must organize his material for teaching.

1. First of all, **the teacher must get the meaning of the lesson.** He is set to teach the Bible, not what men have thought or the Church has said. No comment or dogma or application is of importance as compared with *what the writer himself actually meant to say.* That is fundamental. It must come first.

Three conditions must be fulfilled if the teacher is really to get the meaning of the lesson:

(1) *He must study it in light of its literary form and its relation to the book from which it is taken.* Despite the unity of revelation that runs through it all, the Bible is not one book, but many. It is a library of books. It contains histories and biographies, letters and poems, dramas and lyric idyls, the writings of prophets and the pithy sayings of wise men. We should study, not passages only, but books. The teacher ought always to read the whole book from which the lesson is taken, with a view to its literary form and the intent of the author. Only through this knowledge of the whole can he grasp the full meaning of the part.

(2) *He must study it in light of the historical circumstances under which it was said or written.* Eternal as is the truth of God's revelation in the Bible, it had its times and places. The prophets spake, not to future generations, but to the men of their day. They were political leaders and social reformers, revealing God's will in a nation's crises. St. Paul wrote to particular churches and to individual men, and because he had something specific to say to them. The teacher needs both knowledge and imagination. He must be able in thought to live in Bible times. He must appreciate the situation. He must catch the point of view of the man who wrote the words he studies, and those for whom they were written. He must understand what they meant *then,* if he is rightly to interpret them *now.*

(3) *He must study it sympathetically.* The men who wrote the books of the Bible were practical men; but they were not matter-of-

fact. They were seers. History spoke to them of the living God. The heavens declared to them His glory, and the firmament showed His handiwork. Unless the teacher, too, has the vision of faith, he will not comprehend. Not as *mere* literature or history may he look upon the lesson he studies. In prayer he will seek the truth of God. "Spiritual sympathy is indispensable for the sound interpretation of books written to convey spiritual truth. As the Bible is intended to set forth religious truth, so must it be studied in a religious spirit." *

2. **The teacher must choose an aim for the teaching of the lesson.** The ultimate aim is always the same—the spiritual development of the pupil. But it is not enough to purpose this in a general way; he must plan *just how to make this particular lesson work toward that end.*

(1) *He should choose a single aim for each lesson.* Have one purpose, one central thought; and stick to it. Some teachers go at a lesson piece-meal. They have a pupil read a verse; then ask, "Now, what do we learn from that?" There follows a discussion of the spiritual truth supposed to be contained in that verse, and its application to life; then the next verse is taken up in the same way, and so on to the end. This is not teaching a lesson; it is rather a mulling over of as many lessons as there are verses in the assignment for the day. The unity of the passage is lost. It is treated as a mere collection of separate texts. Each stands alone and is made to carry its own lesson.

Such a procedure is wrong, first, because *it embodies a false conception of the Bible.* The Bible is not a mere collection of texts. Its books are coherent. There is a connection of events in the history it records. Its letters are such as sensible men write, with a beginning, a middle and an end. Its prophecies contain, not the scattered and enigmatic oracles of soothsayers, but the sane and sober vision of practical men who saw life no less reasonably because they saw it in a divine light. If the teacher, in fact, has fulfilled the conditions set down above, and has gotten the actual meaning of the lesson, he will not think of teaching in this scattered way. The passage will have a point for him, and he will direct his teaching toward making that point clear to his pupils.

Such a procedure is wrong, again, because *it is not good teaching.* It lacks unity and force. The pupil carries away nothing just because too much has been given. He does not get the point because confused by too many points. Do not use every thought that the lesson sug-

* Burton and Mathews: "Principles and Ideals for the Sunday School," p. 24.

gests. Pick out only what you need to help develop the main theme. Not "Is this thought good?" but "Will it help my pupils to grasp the point of the day's lesson?" must be the criterion.

(2) *Not every lesson need aim directly at the formulation of some moral or spiritual truth.* There are teachers who have learned not to try to squeeze a spiritual application out of every verse, who yet attempt to get one out of every lesson. But the fact that every lesson *can* yield such a conclusion does not prove that it *ought.* Nor does the fact that our general aim is spiritual imply that each single passage should be studied with reference to its separate spiritual message.

Such a procedure may, in fact, hinder the fullest realization of our ultimate aim. It is yet a piece-meal method of studying the Bible, less objectionable than the verse-by-verse method only because the pieces are not quite so tiny. It conveys no idea of the continuity of events or of the onward movement of the Spirit in the minds of men. And it begets within the pupil a habit of mind which will keep him from looking beyond the single lesson for the truth. He will not organize rightly what he learns. He will not grasp the great things of God's teaching. He will study the Bible in cross-section and miss the perspective of a third dimension.

Some lessons are but links in a chain, items in the development of a truth so great that many lessons are needed to bring it out. Our immediate aim in such a lesson is intellectual rather than moral or spiritual. We seek, not to jump at applications, but to prepare for other lessons and to organize the data from which the spiritual conclusion will ultimately be drawn. The teacher ought squarely to face the issue: "Is this lesson one for conclusion and application, or for preparation and organization? Is it complete in itself, or a part with other lessons of a larger whole? Shall I finish it off at the end of the period and start again next Sunday, or shall I make it point on to the coming lesson and remain incomplete without it?"

(3) *He should aim to present, as simply and directly as possible, the meaning of the Bible passage itself.* This is implied in all that we have said. It is the sum and substance of the whole matter. Having himself gotten the actual meaning of the Bible writer, it is the teacher's business to make the pupil see that meaning as he does. His work is expository. The lesson should have a single aim, not because one may be chosen at random, but because the writer had a single aim. He wrote the passage because he had a point to make. And not every lesson need aim directly at the formulation of a moral or spiritual truth, just because his point in writing was not always such.

It is the vice of much Sunday school teaching of our time to wander far from this expository ideal. It does not draw the central thought of the lesson from the Bible itself, but reads into the Bible one brought from without. Just as some preachers first write their sermon, then hunt for a text to serve as a point of attachment to the Word of God and certificate of authority, so some teachers seize upon any attractive "application" that presents itself, however remote it may be from the actual intent and meaning of the passage, and make the whole lesson work toward it. They have a single aim, but it is the wrong one. They are not teaching the Bible; they are using it simply for illustration and as a sort of external authority.

3. **The teacher must lay out a plan for the teaching of the lesson.** He dare not rely upon the inspiration of the moment. For sake of economy of time and definiteness of presentation, as well as to insure the interest and cooperation of the class, he must organize his material beforehand and plan the steps to be taken in the development of the theme.

4. **The Herbartian plan of the lesson** has become traditional.* It contains *five formal steps:*

(1) *Preparation.* The lesson begins by getting the pupil ready for the truth which he is to learn. The teacher calls up in his mind whatever he may already know about it or related matters, that he may feel a need of further knowledge, and that those ideas may be uppermost which will enable him rightly to comprehend and assimilate it.

(2) *Presentation.* Then comes the presentation of the lesson material. The teacher imparts the particular facts from which the new truth is to be learned.

(3) *Association.* This step is often called *comparison and abstraction.* It is a working over of the lesson material. The facts presented are compared with one another, and points of likeness and difference are made clear. The teacher inquires into their relations to one another, and the pupil is made to see the common factor that runs through them all, or the links of time and place, cause and effect, reason and consequence, that bind them together into a coherent whole. If the previous step is one of perception, this is one of reasoning. Presentation seeks to make the pupil see facts; association, to understand their relations.

(4) *Generalization.* The new truth embodied in the facts is for-

*The German philosopher Herbart (1776-1841) was the first to make a scientific study of the process of education itself. His followers carried on his work, and the Herbartian pedagogy has had a wide influence. For a detailed treatment of

mulated in a definite and compact statement. The conclusion is drawn.

(5) *Application.* Finally, the truth is used. The pupil is set to apply the principle or definition or rule which he formulated in the fourth step, to new situations. Since it is true, he is asked what would happen under such and such circumstances, different from any that had been used in its presentation.

"These formal steps of the recitation have a universal application," says Rein.* But it is a question *how far they may be applied to the teaching of the Sunday school lesson.* If we use the plan at all, it must be in spirit rather than in letter. The teacher would fail miserably who would divide the recitation period into five parts and attempt to fit this framework upon every lesson. Yet it is in a sense true that we must each day prepare the pupil's mind for the truth, present it clearly, think out its parts and relations, formulate and apply it.

The fact is that these are not the natural steps of every lesson, as Rein thinks. They are the steps of an *inductive lesson*—one wherein the pupil is led to infer a general truth from a number of particular instances. If the aim of a public school teacher be, for example, to teach to children the meaning of the word "although," after a brief *preparation* she would *present* a number of sentences containing the word, then lead the class to *compare* them and to pick out the single idea that is common to all. This idea, then, they would *formulate* in a definition of the word "although," or a rule for its use; and finally they would be set to work to *use* it for themselves in new sentences.

Many Sunday school lessons are inductive, but not nearly all. The plan may well be followed with a research class, for example, studying such a subject as the Messianic ideas of the prophets; or with an elementary class, to make plain God's love and care as shown in manifold ways in nature and in His dealings with His children. It is the best method for a review which is to bring together and formulate the results of a group of lessons upon a common theme. In these and like cases there must be explicit comparison of a number of presented facts and generalization from them.

But there are other lessons which cannot well take this form. Some aim simply at the connected presentation of historical facts or at an

the formal steps, see De Garmo's "Essentials of Method," or McMurry's "Method of the Recitation." Bagley's treatment is brief, but clear and to the point—"The Educative Process," pp. 284-304.

* Rein: "Outline of Pedagogics," p. 187.

exposition of the teaching of some man or book. Some, too, that aim directly at the formulation of a moral or spiritual truth, develop it by interpretation of a single instance rather than by generalization from many. Jesus often used a single story to bring out the truth. Ideals, in fact, are never mere inductions. They must appeal to that which is within one.

It is thus impossible to lay out a general scheme that will fit all lessons. The plan must vary with the aim and the material. At least three parts, however, every lesson should have—*preparation, presentation and conclusion.*

5. **Preparation.** A great deal depends upon the way that you begin a lesson. And it is no easy task to begin rightly. There must be more than an introduction; there must be a real preparation for what is to follow. The aim of this first part is threefold: (1) to bring up within the pupil's mind such ideas as he may already possess concerning the theme to be treated; (2) to arouse his interest and give him a motive to seek further knowledge; (3) to set a definite subject for the work of the day.

(1) *You must begin with the pupil's own ideas.* This follows from the principle of apperception. The pupil *will* understand the lesson in terms drawn from his own experience. You cannot help that. It is the only way that he *can* understand at all. It is your business, then, to call up within his mind such items of his previous knowledge as may enable him rightly to comprehend it.

It does not matter where these ideas may have come from, provided they are his own and are really to the point. You must not introduce new material here. You may revive his memories of former lessons, or call up things he has read, or remind him of concrete experiences that he has had. In any case the one great question is—Is this idea one that will really help him to understand the lesson as he ought to understand it? Some introductions arouse interest enough, but not in the point of the lesson; they call up vivid ideas, but such as distract the pupil's attention and distort his final comprehension of the truth. They are introductions, but in no sense preparations.

(2) *You must arouse the pupil's interest.* You must make him *want* to know the truth you are going to teach. The preparation "should *show the need* of the new material *from the pupil's standpoint.*"*

You must take account, therefore, not only of the pupil's previous

* Bagley: "The Educative Process," p. 291. The simple plan which we are now discussing makes preparation include what Bagley calls the sub-step "statement of the aim."

ideas, but of his *attitude* toward them. You must bring up such as have life in them and worth in his eyes. By tactful remark or pointed question you will show him their incompleteness. You will awaken within him a sense of need. You will make him conscious of a gap in his knowledge, and get him to feel that it is worth filling up.

This is what Du Bois has so finely called "finding the point of contact." * The preparation must succeed in bringing together *the pupil's interests* on the one hand and *the point of the lesson* on the other. It fails if it deals with either alone. There are introductions which work up logically enough to the truth of the lesson, but do not direct toward it the pupil's active interest; just as there are others which awaken interest, but in something else than the lesson point. If the pupils are interested enough in what they have been learning and the lessons have historical or logical continuity, the ideal preparation may be a brief review. But more often you must set out from some concrete experience. And there are times, be it admitted, when all rules fail; and you will be driven to use anything to get the attention of the class.

(3) *You must set a definite subject for the lesson.* This is the conclusion of the preparation and the transition to presentation. It gives form to the pupil's sense of need, and direction to his interest. It centers attention upon the thing to be learned.

The *subject* of the lesson is not the same as the *aim*. "When we face the child who has wandered from the point, it seems easier to ask, 'What are we talking about?' than to ask, 'What is the aim of our talk?'" † Moreover, the aim that we have formulated for ourselves may not appeal to the pupil immediately or at all. The subject must be stated from his standpoint, not from ours. It should be *brief* and *attractive*. It should be *worth remembering*, and serve as a clue for the subsequent recall of the lesson. It should, therefore, whenever possible, contain both a proper name and the lesson event or a characterization. "Abraham willing to offer Isaac," "Joseph's kindness to his brothers," "Joshua's battle against five kings," "Jeremiah, the man who suffered to save his city"—are examples taken at random from the International Graded Lessons. Such titles set up an association between the lesson story and the name, so that each is bound to bring up the other.

*The method of the preparation*, with reference to its first two aims, should be that of questions and answers. It must enlist *the pupil's*

* Du Bois: "The Point of Contact in Teaching." The phrase "point of contact" was used by Herbart himself.

† Brown: "How to Plan a Lesson," p. 27.

activity, bring out *his* ideas and arouse *his* interest. Sometimes a good story may come in well; but it should not be used alone or with mere comment by the teacher. The subject should be stated, however, by the teacher—for the obvious reason that the pupil cannot be expected to formulate a subject for lesson material that he has not yet gotten.

The whole part should be brief and to the point. Many teachers take entirely too long. They dull the edge of the pupil's interest before they reach the presentation. It is always easy to wander from the point when questions are asked; and especially easy when the pupils do not know what the questions are leading up to, as is the case here.

If your method of conducting the class involves the giving of assignments, the greater part of the preparation must come on the Sunday preceding the discussion of the lesson. It may include, too, a brief blocking out of the course that the presentation will take, that each pupil may understand just what he is to do, and the relation of his assignment to the whole.

**6. Presentation.** The presentation of new material is the body of the lesson. In general, it should occupy at least two-thirds of the time. We need not discuss it here in detail. The preceding chapter and the three succeeding deal directly with methods of presentation.

(1) The presentation varies, of course, with *the general methods of conducting the class* discussed in the last chapter. In case of any method involving home study by the pupils, a part of the presentation comes from the text-book and from their use of the Bible. Each pupil may have his share, then, in the class presentation.

(2) *Present the essential facts first.* Go over the whole lesson quickly, touching on the big things. Get the facts clearly and in perspective.

(3) You are then ready for the *discussion*—working over the facts, inquiring into their relations and implications, clearing up obscure points, hearing reports from pupils, organizing their results, and all the time working steadily toward a fuller comprehension of the main point.

(4) You will use whatever *illustrative material* you need to hold the pupil's interest and to help him understand—object-teaching, manual work, correlation with previous lessons or with the work of the public schools, stories, pictures, blackboard, stereoscope, and the like. We shall discuss these in succeeding chapters. Just one caution here. Remember the carpenter's rule reported by Dr. W. M.

Taylor: "We must never construct ornament, but only ornament construction." *

7. **Conclusion.** *Intellectually*, the conclusion is the final step in the organization of the lesson material; *practically*, it brings home an obligation.

(1) *The discussion should end with a definite summing up of results.* The pupil should be led to look back over the lesson and to formulate its essential point in a compact statement. It should be an answer to the question with which you began your own study: "Just what did the writer himself mean to say?" If you have taught as you should, the pupil's conclusion will be his statement, in his own way, of the same thought that you chose as the aim of the lesson.

(2) *When the lesson is one of a series, the conclusion should formulate its bearing upon what went before and what is to come.* The point of the lesson may be in itself comparatively unimportant, yet essential to the development of a greater truth. It may be that the only good of a certain lesson is to supply a link of historical connection; yet if it really succeeds in helping to make the history of the Hebrew people clear and coherent, its service is as real as that of one which deals directly with some great spiritual insight.

(3) These two elements of the conclusion are *intellectual;* they deal with the organization of *ideas.* But our aim is *practical* as well. God's truth touches the conscience. It brings us face to face with *ideals.*

*Sometimes the practical conclusion should be definitely and explicitly stated; sometimes not.* To know when is one of the teacher's most serious problems. There is need here of tact and good sense as well as of consecration. We shall take up this problem when we come to the chapter upon the spiritual goal of our work. Enough now to say that there are two reasons why a teacher may make a mistake who insists upon bringing home in so many words the practical bearing of each lesson: (*a*) because indirect suggestion is often more potent than direct suggestion; (*b*) because in the mind of the pupil such a statement of obligation may substitute our own authority for that of God's Word. We shall discuss these reasons later. The practical aim of our work dare never be forgotten; it is a question simply of method.

(4) *The pupil should make the conclusion for himself.* It should be his own. It so means more, both to you and to him, than if you present a conclusion for his acceptance. Of course, you will often have to correct a wrong impression and help to reconstruct a poor statement;

* Hervey: "Picture-Work," p. 30.

but the right of summing up results belongs to the pupil. Indeed, he only can sum up the real results, for they are within him.

8. Finally, we must remember that no plan is sacred. **Our plans must be adaptable.** *They must fit the material.* You will not teach history in the same way as poetry or even as biography; neither will you present the soul-stirring sermons of the prophets as you would the worldly wisdom of a collection of proverbs. You cannot apply the same plan to letters such as those of Paul and to a dramatic dialogue like the book of Job. *They must fit the pupil.* What may be an excellent form for a junior lesson would fall flat with senior pupils. *They must be fitted to the exigencies of the occasion.* The discussion will take many an unexpected turn. Some of these will reveal real needs. No class can have life that is held too rigidly to a prearranged scheme.

## QUESTIONS

1. What conditions must the teacher's study fulfill if he is to get the real meaning of the lesson? Give reasons for each of them.

2. Why should the teacher choose a single aim for each lesson?

3. "Not every lesson need aim directly at the formulation of some moral or spiritual truth." Why?

4. Why must the teacher lay out his lesson plan beforehand? Why is it not enough, without this, to study the lesson thoroughly?

5. Explain the steps of the Herbartian plan.

6. Why is the Herbartian plan not applicable to every Sunday school lesson?

7. Explain clearly what you understand by an inductive lesson.

8. What three parts must every lesson have?

9. What is the threefold aim of the part of preparation? Give a reason for each aim.

10. Discuss the method of the part of preparation, with respect to each of its three aims.

11. Why should the essential facts of the whole lesson be presented first, and the detailed discussion follow?

12. What should the conclusion accomplish, intellectually and practically? Why should the pupil draw the conclusion for himself?

## LESSON XV

### The Pupil at Work

The true class, we have seen, is cooperative. The teacher will not do all the work. He will enlist the activity of the pupil. In this lesson we shall think of the pupil's work. What can the teacher get his pupils to do?

1. **Three principles underlie the work of the pupil:**

(1) *There is no learning without mental activity on the part of the pupil.* This is the principle of self-activity, already familiar. You cannot think for your pupil. He must make his own ideas. The point we need here to emphasize is that learning requires *mental* activity. The pupil must *think,* not simply do. A class may be very active, yet learn little. They may answer every question—looking it up in their lesson leaves—and at the end know nothing. They may make beautiful maps and portfolios, even write out careful and correct answers in the blank spaces after the questions in their textbooks; yet do it all so unthinkingly that they fail to lay hold of the truth. You must arouse the *mind,* not simply mouth and hands.

(2) *To insure definite mental activity, the pupil must in some way express its results.* This is one meaning of the oft-quoted pedagogical maxim, "No impression without expression." To make sure that the pupil *gets* the truth, you should have him *express* it. "We learn by doing." We never really know a thing until we give it to someone else. You experience this every Sunday that you teach. After the class hour is over, you know the lesson as you never could know it before. The teaching has reacted upon yourself. Thoughts that before were vague have taken shape as you sought to express them; your mind has moved with sureness of purpose; your convictions are aglow. You feel that you would like to teach the lesson over again, and that you could now do it much better.

The pupil's expression of what he has learned is thus much more than a mere test. It is not simply for sake of letting you know what he has gotten and what he has failed to get. *The expression is itself a means of impression.* It helps him to learn. It moves his mind to act. It gives him a motive to think. It impels him to clear up his ideas and to make thoughts definite which might otherwise remain

vague and formless. The expression is a revelation to the pupil himself of just what he really does know.

We often hear people say, "I know that, but I cannot express it" —meaning that they cannot put it into words. It is undoubtedly true. We all know many more things than we can put into words. Words are only arbitrary symbols; language is but one of many forms of expression. Much of our thinking is in mental pictures rather than in words. We express ourselves in intonation, gesture, action, as well as in language. Indeed, the real meaning of an idea is better expressed in the action it leads to than the form of words that it calls up. It is the man of action rather than the man of words that we should rely upon if we had to choose between them.

Yet it is language that makes knowledge socially usable. Thoughts that we cannot put into words may be our own inner sustenance; but they can be shared with no one else. We may apply here what Paul said to the people of Corinth about the value of mystical babbling in "tongues": "He that speaketh in a tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the church. . . . I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that I might instruct others also, than ten thousand words in a tongue."* If one cannot express in words what he knows, he does not yet know it in the way that he ought. While it is not our business to tell everything that we know, we ought to know everything so definitely that we could tell it if there were occasion.

(3) *There is no expression without a social motive.* It is to other persons that we tell things, and for others or for recognition by them that we do what we do. Without them, we should have no motive to express what is within us. We do not speak just for sake of speaking, or write merely for the pleasure of feeling a thought form itself at our finger-tips; we speak *to somebody* and write *for some reason.* So with a pupil. Bid him simply to tell what he knows, and you will dry up the springs of thought and speech within him. He has no vital motive. But arrange a social situation such that he may tell it *to somebody* and *for some reason*, and he will express himself in a natural and spontaneous way. Public school teachers have found that the girl whose compositions are formal and stilted may yet write a simple and natural letter to a girl in another town; that the boy who cannot write an essay worth looking at may hand in an excellent article for the school paper; that a pupil who seems tongue-tied when called on to recite may be able to tell to another pupil the very thing he

* 1 Cor. xiv. 4, 19.

could not in class find words for. It is your business as teacher not merely to demand expression from your pupil, but *to furnish motives and material, to provide social situations such as naturally call it forth.*

2. **In the beginners' department we must provide for and use the child's physical activity and play.** The department should have a separate room, if possible ; if not, it should be screened off from the rest of the school. It should have little chairs that can be arranged in a circle about the teacher. The program of the hour should be informal, the instruction periods short. Better have two short periods than one longer one, and a time between for rest, change of position and physical activity.

The use of physical activity and play in the Sunday school can be objected to only by those who do not understand children. It does not mean that the department is to be in constant turmoil, each pupil doing what he pleases and moving about where he will, while the teacher distractedly tries to keep all busy. It does not mean that the atmosphere of reverence and worship is lost. It means rather that the teacher recognizes that there is sure to be physical activity, for children are so made ; and plans to use and direct it and so confine it within proper bounds, instead of trying to repress it and only succeeding in spreading it over the whole hour in form of mischievous interruption.

Marches, drills and motion songs and plays have both a recreative and an educational value for children of this age. They may be used to illustrate and impress the truth of the lesson, as well as to engage active hands and feet and little bodies full of play. And it is often wise to use them just for rest and recreation. After five minutes of such bodily activity, with fresh air, the children are ready in perfect quiet to give eager attention to the lesson story. Care must be taken, of course, not to lose the quiet spirit of the hour. Jig-time music and violent exercises are out of place. There is no need, moreover, of a physical material for play, such as the kindergarten gives.

The little child's play, we have seen, is imaginative and dramatic. *You need nothing more than simple little plays that enlist at once the body and the imagination.* Let the children represent trees or birds or flowers, snow or rain, and go through appropriate motions to the accompaniment of piano or song. A little child's play instinct is easily met. It demands nothing elaborate or boisterous. The one requirement is that you satisfy the imagination. You must enter with him into the land of make-believe.

3. **In the primary department, the work of the pupil centers about his reproduction of the story.** If the lesson story has been well told, nothing will give the children greater delight than to reproduce it for themselves. And nothing can be of more educational value. It is real self-expression, socially motived. It makes the truth the child's own. There are three ways in which the children may reproduce the story:

(1) *Telling it.* "It is such fun to listen to a good story that children remember it without effort, and later, when asked if they can tell it, they are as eager to try as if it were a personal experience which they were burning to impart. Each pupil is given a chance to try each story, at some time. Then that one which each has told especially well is allotted to him for his own particular story, on which he has an especial claim thereafter. It is surprising to note how individual and distinctive the expression of voice and manner becomes, after a short time. The child instinctively emphasizes the points which appeal to him, and the element of fun in it all helps bring forgetfulness of self." *

This is an account of story-telling by children in the public schools, where the interest of the teacher was not primarily in the content of the story itself, but in the development of the child's power of expression. It applies as well to the work of the Sunday school teacher, who is interested in having the child lay hold of the truth of the story. Let not the word "fun" mislead us. The fun of story-telling is not amiss in the Sunday school. It is the joy of the creative imagination, the happiness of inwardly seeing and feeling what one tells and of putting one's whole self into the telling. It is the delight of making others see and feel, and sharing with them the truth that seems so real. What matter if the story is old, and the child tells it time after time in the same words, and often with the very inflections that the teacher first used? That, for children, only adds to the pleasure of the telling. They do not want different words. They like to recognize the old forms, and even to join in the refrain when certain striking phrases are reached. It is a blessed boon to the teacher—this natural love of repetition. It makes easy the permanent implanting of the truth.

(2) *Drawing.* Every child likes to draw, and every child should be allowed to. It is not that we hope to develop artists, but simply that drawing is a natural form of expression. The child who tries to tell a story in a picture must have a definite and clear mental picture.

* Bryant: "How to Tell Stories to Children," p. 112. The quotation is slightly abridged by the omission of local references.

"In the simplest and most unconscious way possible, the small artist is developing the power of conceiving and holding the concrete image of an idea given, the power which is at the bottom of all arts of expression." * The story afterward is more vivid and real to his mental vision. He can tell it better in words just because he has tried to tell it in pictures.

The most convenient forms of drawing for the Sunday school are: (*a*) Drawing with pencil or black or colored crayons upon fairly large sheets of paper. "No tables are needed, as it takes less time and is more convenient to place the papers in the seats of the chairs, and let the children kneel before them to work." † (*b*) Drawing upon the blackboard. Children like this, for the novelty of going to the board, and for the prominence it gives to the one chosen to draw a picture for the class. It also permits cooperative drawing—one child making part of a picture and others completing it—which engages the hearty interest of the whole class if you do not have it too often. (*c*) Cutting out silhouettes from paper. This may be called drawing because it, too, is outline work. Children take a great deal of pleasure in it, and produce far better illustrations than one would at first think.

The drawings will be very crude, but that does not matter. You are not teaching drawing, but Bible stories. *Do not waste time trying to get a perfect picture.* It is but a means by which the child may express his own ideas and get the benefit that comes from such expression. Of course, in so far as the drawing reveals a misconception of the story, you will correct it, just as you would one revealed in the child's telling the story. You will take care never to suggest a drawing when the story is one that would be hard for a child to illustrate, or when his attempt would be apt to lead to misconceptions.

(3) *Playing the story.* Children are naturally dramatic. They take keen delight in acting out a story. It is the spirit of make-believe play. Each little actor, creating his own part, himself lives in the story and expresses in the most natural way possible its meaning to him. He has the most concrete of social motives for his expression of the truth, for he feels the motive that the one in the story himself felt.

Teachers in the public schools are just beginning to understand what an instrument is afforded them by this natural instinct for dramatic expression. It is plain how it lends itself to the teaching of reading

* Bryant: "How to Tell Stories to Children," p. 115.

† "International Graded Lessons: Beginners' Teacher's Text-Book, First Year, Part I.," p. 24.

and composition and to the development of a love for good literature. The class is never ready to stop with the first impromptu acting out of a story; they want to try again and improve their presentation. Classes have spent several months of earnest work in writing out their own dramatization of "Rip Van Winkle"; and it has given a new motive to all their school work, besides bettering their reading and composition and helping them learn a lot of history and geography.

The Sunday school might well learn something here from the experience of the public school. There is no reason why children should not act out Bible stories just as they do others. There is no irreverence in the thought, provided we choose such stories as do not necessitate anyone's acting the part of God or of Jesus. There is one use, at least, for such dramatizations that would be a great improvement upon the present practice of most schools. On festival occasions, instead of presenting a ready-made cantata or a "service" full of dance music and bad "poetry," let the children give a little play of their own composition, the result of several months of work upon a suitable Bible story.

*The first of these forms of reproduction*—the child's telling the story—*is obviously the most usable.* It never loses its charm, and may be used with any story. *All three methods may be used in the beginners' department as well as the primary*, to the degree that you find them, by actual experience, to be adapted to the particular children you have to teach.

The time for the first reproduction of a story is on the Sunday following its presentation; and after that it may be retold or reacted as often as seems worth while. *The period for reproduction* should be the first of the two instruction periods, the second being given to telling the new story. This applies as well to the beginners' department as to the primary. In each, whatever work the children do at home throughout the week should be *about the story told on the previous Sunday and in preparation for its reproduction;* rather than in anticipation of the new story that is to come. In this respect the story method of teaching differs from the other methods which we have discussed. Its home work comes after the presentation of the lesson story; they involve an assignment of new material for study, in preparation for the class presentation.

4. **We shall enlist the activity of junior pupils by handwork.** The term "handwork" has been applied rather loosely in discussions of Sunday school methods. We shall understand by it *the construction by the pupil of some object or record which shall express the re-*

*sults of his study in a more or less permanent way.* It differs from the mere activity of the beginners' department in that it gives form to a physical material, and from the drawing of the primary department in that it aims at some permanent perfection of result. It is more than a transient means of expression; it aims to make something worth keeping. There are as many sorts of handwork as there are possible things for a pupil to make in connection with the Sunday school lessons. We may sum up the more important occupations in five great classes:

(1) *Picture work.* Drawing pictures illustrative of the lessons, or coloring pictures with water-color or crayon; collecting pictures from various sources, especially those of the great masters as reproduced in the many excellent series now so cheaply available; cutting pictures out and pasting them in a portfolio or note-book, either as a simple collection or as illustrations for a written text.

(2) *Map work.* Coloring outline maps; locating places; tracing journeys; drawing maps; modeling relief maps in sand, clay or pulp; drawing plans of cities and diagrams of buildings; constructing a series of maps to show historical and political changes; and the like. There is room here for a great variety of work, and it can be made of absorbing interest.

(3) *Written work.* Text-books filled out, portfolios constructed, or note-books written up. They may contain written answers to questions, copies of verses, outlines and charts; stories and narratives; a life of Jesus or Paul, or a record of their travels; a brief history of the period studied; a harmony of the gospels; collections of Bible poems or speeches; and the like. The book should be illustrated with pictures and maps, drawn by the pupil himself or pasted in; and when finished it should be neatly and permanently bound, to serve as a record of the year's work. Such books, of course, may be of all degrees of elaborateness.

(4) *Object work.* The construction of objects to illustrate the lessons, such as models of the tabernacle or temple, miniature tents, houses, carts, furniture, weapons, etc. The girls will enjoy making clothes such as were worn in Bible times and dressing dolls in them; the boys may make figures of clay or pulp to represent characters and scenes.

(5) *Museum work.* The collection of articles to illustrate the lessons, to be given by the class to the school and made part of a permanent museum, available for use by future classes. They may secure relics of Bible times or articles from the Palestine of to-day—such as

coins, garments, weapons, stones, grain, flowers. Of especial usefulness will be such additions as they can make to the school's collection of pictures, lantern slides or views for the stereoscope.

These manual methods are very flexible. You must adapt the work to your own particular situation. You must put to yourself at least three questions:

(*a*) *What sort of handwork shall we try to do, and how much?* Such work, and only so much, as is needed to engage the pupil's interest and cooperation. The handwork is not an end in itself; it is but a means to a higher end. The Sunday school does not exist for sake of manual training; its aim is spiritual. Handwork is of value in just so far as it helps the pupil to get the truth he needs; it becomes a hindrance if it keeps him from lifting his soul above mere things.

(*b*) *Shall the handwork be done in the class or at home?* Wherever, by actual experience, you find that you can get the best results. It is hard to get pupils to do the work at home with any regularity. They are busy with public school work and there are too many distractions. On the other hand, the lesson period on Sunday is too short for anything more than the discussion of the lesson. If you do the work in class, you must have a longer period, seat the children about a table and work with them, not for them. It is best, but not necessary, to have a separate class-room. There is, of course, a third possibility, which may be combined with either of the other two. The class will be glad now and then to meet on a weekday evening for sewing or modeling or some other particularly interesting piece of work.

(*c*) *Shall the handwork be done before or after the presentation of the lesson.* It depends upon the maturity of the pupils. Younger children, to whom the lesson must be presented in story form, will do the work best after the story has been told. Older children will take more interest in doing work that looks forward to a coming class discussion than in work that reviews the discussion of the previous Sunday. They want to find out things for themselves. If we follow the story method, then, the first instruction period will be for review and for handwork or reports upon handwork done at home; the second will be given to the new story. If we follow other methods, the first period will be given to discussion of the lesson for the day, using the results of home study and handwork, or actually doing the work; the second, generally shorter, will be devoted to assignment and preparation for the lesson of the coming week.*

* A concrete account, with illustrations, of two manual courses that have stood the test of practical service, is found in the Third Report of the Committee on

5. **Memory work should have an increasing place in the three lower departments, culminating in the junior.** The beginners may learn little Bible verses; the primary pupils will memorize longer verses and hymns. The juniors are in the "golden memory period." They should store the mind with such Bible passages and religious forms *as they ought to remember word for word in after life.*

(1) *Memory work requires actual class drill.* It is not enough to "hear the children say" the verses they are supposed to have learned at home, and help them out when they stumble. You must squarely face the fact that most children will not learn their verses at home. You must teach them yourself. You must by drill make them memorize what they ought.

(2) *Memory drill depends upon the law of habit.* Two conditions must be fulfilled: (*a*) the pupil must put his whole *attention* upon the material to be learned, apprehending it *clearly* and *distinctly;* (*b*) there must be sufficient *repetition* to fix it.

(3) *The time for drill should be early in the hour*, before the pupil has begun to tire and while his power of attention is unjaded. It is a mistake to assume, as many teachers do, that memory work, being mechanical, can be done at any time. It demands the most favorable conditions. Teacher and pupils should be at their best.

(4) *You must make sure that the pupil understands clearly and definitely just what he is to learn.* Mere concert repetition amounts to little; there must be individual drill as well. If the children can read, the material to be learned should be presented to their eyes as well as to their ears. It is extreme to maintain that a child should commit nothing that he does not comprehend, for the full meaning of many precious verses can be realized only in later life. Yet we seldom err on this side. And certainly a child should never memorize anything that he cannot understand in some degree. We must always explain the meaning of that which we ask him to commit, and make sure that he gets it. A young woman who is now a missionary in the far east admitted that until her senior year in college she thought that "Ebenezer" meant "voice," having learned in early childhood the hymn, "Here I raise mine Ebenezer."

(5) *Repetition is monotonous work;* and your ingenuity will at times be taxed to hold the pupils to it. In general, however, they

Graded Bible Schools, published by the Association of Congregational Churches in Illinois, 153 La Salle Street, Chicago. An excellent discussion of manual methods is found in Cope's "The Modern Sunday School in Principle and Practice." A modification of his classification is used in this chapter.

like it better than you do, for the primitive rhythmic instinct is strong within them. *The best way to hold them is to put life into the drill.* Make it quick and snappy. Children like a brisk mental exercise. Introduce variety by alternating concert with individual recitations. Let one pupil begin a verse and another finish it. Get competition between this boy and that, or between sections of the class; or train your class for competition with another. Give only so much time to each pupil called on; if one fails, go on to the next, and later help him individually. Do not waste the time of the class and wear out their patience by dealing too long with individual cases of stupidity or lack of effort. Take them separately and in private. The old system of prizes for verses learned had better be given up.

(6) *There must be frequent review.* Do not drop a verse after it has been learned. Keep calling for it from time to time. It not only keeps old verses fresh in the memory; it helps to maintain variety and interest. The fact that review Sunday comes at the end of the quarter does not mean that reviews may be let go until then.

6. **In the higher departments the pupil works at assigned study.** We have already discussed the teacher's problems in connection with this. We shall simply remind ourselves of three counsels then brought out:

(1) *Assign a specific bit of study to each pupil and hold him responsible for it.* It will generally lead him to study the whole lesson.

(2) *Suit the assignments to the maturity of the class.* Beginning with bits of memory work or handwork, the method should aim to make pupils able to study a given topic intelligently and to report upon it concisely.

(3) *Show your pupils how to study.* Take a class period now and then to study with them, instead of the usual discussion; and teach them how to go at their lessons. Watch your opportunity for a talk with each pupil individually, and work with him some week in the preparation of his topic, to show him how you would do it. *Most of all, begin as early as you can to use the reference library, and develop within your pupils the ability to handle its books for themselves.* Show them how to use Hastings' Bible Dictionary, the concordance, atlas, histories and books of travel and exploration.

Many an adolescent loses interest in the work of the Sunday school because it seems so pinched intellectually. His lesson leaf presents such a meager lot of material, he thinks, and that all digested for him. You can do such a boy no greater service than to bring him into contact with the work of the great Bible scholars. Give him references to

*real books* instead of text-books—to Ramsey, Edersheim, Thompson, George Adam Smith, Schürer. He may be repelled because he finds them too hard, but he will at least have acquired a new respect for the text-book that brings him the results of such work. Best of all, he may refuse to be daunted by something hard, and acquire a permanent interest in the problems of Biblical interpretation.

## QUESTIONS

1. What three principles, according to this chapter, underlie the work of the pupil?

2. Is it true that one may know a thing without being able to express it in words? Can one know a thing without being able to express it in any way at all? Give reasons for your answers.

3. Why must we provide for physical activity and play in the beginners' department? What sort of play is best adapted to the work of the Sunday school?

4. Describe the three ways in which pupils may reproduce the lesson story. Explain some of the difficulties attending each.

5. What part of the class hour should be given to story reproduction? Why?

6. What do you understand by handwork as employed by the Sunday school?

7. What are the five great sorts of handwork available for the Sunday school? Describe an example of each.

8. Should handwork be done in the class or at home? Give reasons.

9. Should handwork be done before or after the presentation of the lesson? Give reasons.

10. What sort of passages and formulas should the pupil commit to memory?

11. Discuss the methods of the teacher in memory work. What part of the class hour should he devote to it? Why?

12. What ways of getting pupils to study are mentioned in this chapter? Explain any other methods you know, bringing out both their advantages and disadvantages.

## LESSON XVI

### Attention and Apperception: Principles

How to engage the pupil's attention and make sure that he gets the meaning we want him to get, is the problem of this chapter.*

#### I. PSYCHOLOGICAL PRINCIPLES

1. **The nature of attention.** The best way to describe attention is by a figure of speech. The field of a camera, we all know, has a focus, a central point where the picture is perfectly clear and distinct. Things upon the margin of the field appear blurred and vaguely outlined in proportion to their distance from the focus. Just so the field of consciousness has a focus and a margin. The activity of the mind always centers itself about some one thing or group of things, some single idea or thought. It is the object of attention. Something else may take its place in the fraction of a second, for thought is quick; but for the moment it stands at the focus and other things are upon the margin. It is clear and distinct to the mental vision; they are more or less dim and blurred.

*We are always paying attention to something or other.* Attention is a constant characteristic of the mind's action. Every moment of consciousness has its focus. Not to give attention to anything would mean to be unconscious.

*Attention cannot be kept long upon an unchanging object.* It shifts rapidly. "Quick as thought" is a proverb. As soon as a thing has been brought into focus and has been clearly and distinctly apprehended, the mind moves on. *That* thing is now known; *that* problem is solved—now what next? Try to keep your attention upon an unchanging object—say the word "Lesson" at the top of this page—and you will find that you cannot, except by constantly having new thoughts about it. But to have a new thought is to change the object of attention. *If the mental object changes*—if we keep looking at it from new points of view, asking new questions about it, relating to new

* In connection with this chapter, the class should review what is said on attention in Lesson X., Section 6; and on apperception in Lesson IV., Section 3; Lesson XII., Section 3; and Lesson XIV., Section 5.

things—we can keep the attention steadily upon the most wooden and changeless of external things.

2. **There are two kinds of attention—voluntary and spontaneous.** *Attention is voluntary* when we keep it directed upon some object by an act of will. It requires effort. We are more or less conscious of a split of impulses. We feel the pull of other things that claim attention; but we resist them and hold our minds to the chosen object. *Attention is spontaneous* when it is drawn to some object naturally and without effort. While tremendous effort may be put forth under stress of spontaneous attention, there is none needed to hold the attention itself upon its object. We are hardly conscious of the pull of other things, for the mind is being given to the strongest.

(1) *Voluntary attention is a state of unstable equilibrium.* It cannot long be sustained without lapsing into spontaneous attention. Either the mind wanders from the topic set, and must by an effort be pulled back to work; or we get interested in the task that was begun voluntarily, and further attention to it becomes spontaneous.

(2) *Spontaneous attention depends upon one's interests.* A man's interests, moreover, reflect *what the man himself is.* Interest may be best defined as *a feeling of worth that accompanies self-expression.* A thing is interesting to one just in so far as it gives him a chance to express what is within him, to realize in action his instincts, habits and ideas, and to press toward completion what he has begun. Interests may be classed as native or acquired, according as they depend chiefly upon instincts or upon habits and ideas. Yet most human interests spring from both sources. Instincts get set into habits, overlaid by experience and transformed by reason; yet they remain at the heart of life's deepest interests. He whose interests are instinctive merely is a savage; but he who has no other than acquired tastes is a fop.

3. **Attention is apperceptive.** We attend to things that we may *understand* them. It is for sake of getting the *meaning* of a given sensation or idea that we focus the activity of the mind upon it. Attention is an assimilative process. It brings what we know to the interpretation of what is as yet unknown; it arouses that which is within us to receive what comes from without; it throws the light of experience upon the new problem of the moment.

*Attention is, in fact, the focal point where past and present meet to determine a meaning.* A repetition of the old and familiar, with no new element, cannot hold the attention and may even fail to arouse it to a passing look. A presentation of the absolutely new, with no link of connection with past experience, would fail just as completely, for

it would be unintelligible. Neither the old alone nor the new alone can engage the attention. The old alone is flat and stale, and is met mechanically by habit; the new alone is meaningless. But when we can bring the past to bear upon the present; when we can see the old in the new and the new in the old, the new giving life to the old and the old giving meaning to the new—then interest awakens, the mind is alert and attention intent upon its problem. *The best way for the teacher to get and hold attention is to fulfill the conditions of apperception.*

And it is just as true that *whatever means you use to get attention will enter vitally into the pupil's apperception of the truth presented.* He must make his ideas for himself, we have said, and out of material from within himself. The meaning a new truth has for him depends upon the old ideas, the instincts and habits that he brings to bear upon it. And he will bring to its interpretation just those ideas, instincts and habits that you arouse within him as you seek to gain his attention. We might, indeed, compactly restate the law of apperception in these terms: *The meaning of each new experience is determined by the appeal it makes upon attention.*

### II. THE TEACHER'S PROBLEM

4. **The teacher must get and hold the attention of his class.** It is for the teacher to *get* rather than for the class to *give.* If our pupils would only pay attention, we sometimes think, how well and interestingly we could teach! But that is to begin at the wrong end. *If we would only teach as we ought, they would pay attention.* The attention of a class depends upon the teacher. It is not so much a condition as a result of good teaching. If you need ask for attention, there is something the matter with you. It is your business so to teach that you grip the minds and hold the interest of your pupils.

*There is no use to teach without attention.* The pupil's body is with you, but his mind is not, and you are wasting words. Without attention you can do nothing. When it slips away your first concern must be to get it back.

*It is positively harmful to teach without attention.* Your pupils will go away with ideas distorted and garbled, a mixture of your teaching and their own fancies, yet will think that they have gotten the truth. No inattentive pupil feels that he is missing anything. He gets what is worse than no impression, *a wrong one.* Moreover, attention, like any other power of the mind, is subject to the law of habit. If you teach without it, you beget within your pupils *the habit of inattention.*

Spiritually, they grow to think lightly of sacred things ; intellectually and morally, they are weakened.

> "Teachers have a great deal to do with the formation of the intellectual habits which will cling to their pupils for the rest of their lives. . . . We ought all to feel some interest in the sort of mental character which our little scholars are acquiring during their intercourse with us. We must look forward to the time when the children will be men and women, and consider what sort of men and women we would have them be. We cannot help desiring that when, hereafter, they read a book, they shall read seriously ; that when they hear a sermon, they shall not bring preoccupied or wandering minds to what they hear ; that as they move along in life, they shall not be unobservant triflers, gazing in helpless vacancy on the mere surface of things, but shall be able to fix their eyes and their hearts steadily on all the sources of instruction which may be open to them. If they are ever to do this, it is necessary that they should have acquired in youth the power of concentrating their attention. This power is the one qualification which so often constitutes the main difference between the wise and the foolish, the successful and the unsuccessful men. Attention is the one habit of the mind which, perhaps more than any other, forms a safeguard for intellectual progress, and even, under the divine blessing, for moral purity. Now, every time a child comes into your class, this habit is either strengthened or weakened. Something is sure to be done, while the children are with you, to make them either better or worse in this respect for the whole of their future lives. . . . Every time you permit disorder, trifling or wandering you are helping to lower and vitiate the mental character of your pupils. You are encouraging them to a bad habit. You are, in fact, doing something to prevent them from ever becoming thoughtful readers, diligent observers and earnest listeners, as long as they live." *

5. **The teacher must engage the interest of his class.** There are other ways, of course, of getting attention. You might demand it or coax for it, scare it into pupils or cajole it out of them, bribe them with rewards or appeal to their respect for yourself. But attention so gotten is unstable and of little worth. It cannot be long sustained, and while it does last, has no apperceptive value. These are but external

* Fitch : "The Art of Securing Attention," School Bulletin edition, pp. 117-119.

means. They bear no relation to the truth you teach. You must arouse the pupil's interest *in the subject itself*, not merely in pleasing you, getting rewards or avoiding punishments. You ought so to teach that the truth may make its own appeal. You should make the pupil "feel that the subject claims attention for itself, not that you are claiming it *for* the subject." *

But this only brings us to the real problem of every teacher. Granted that we must get attention, and the kind of attention that springs from interest, **the great question is—how?** It is no easy thing to hold the interest of a class. And it is not a problem that can be solved once for all. You face it anew each Sunday.

(1) *First of all, remove the distractions.* Begin your effort to hold the attention and interest of your class, by eliminating all those things that would be apt to get it away from you. You are, in fact, a *competitor* for the attention of your pupil. You must contend with other things for it. It is not the total lack of attention that your teaching must combat so much as his proneness to pay attention to something else that is, for the moment, more interesting. Few inattentive pupils are mentally inert. Their minds are active, but in the wrong direction. They are busy thinking of something, but it is not what you want them to think of. The wise teacher, therefore, does all he can to weaken the competition of other things. He removes as completely as possible all distracting conditions.

This is why, ideally, *each class should have a room of its own.* It is hard to hold the interest and attention of a class if there are other classes all about it in the same room, each with its own buzz of discussion, and some with the inevitable loud-mouthed teacher who mistakes intensity of sound for forcefulness. The room should be furnished simply and comfortably, and *for the use of the class.* It should contain nothing in the way of furniture, pictures or paraphernalia that is not in line with the work you expect to do. This does not mean that it is to be bare and unattractive. Pictures, books, maps, tables for manual work, have their rightful place. It is the home and work-room of the class, and it should be both homelike and usable. But the teacher will rigidly exclude anything that has no connection with the work of the class and might distract their attention.

The teacher will see to it that the *physical conditions* of the classroom are favorable. The seats should be comfortable, the heat right, the air kept fresh. No one can give attention when fatigued or dulled by bad air. We must be at our best physically to do good mental work.

* Fitch: op. cit., p. 89.

This is one of the factors that ought to be considered when the hour for the Sunday school session is chosen. A teacher may be attempting the impossible who tries to interest a class of boys who are getting hungry, or even a Bible class of adults who have just listened to a long sermon and meet in the audience room vacated by the congregation.

A great deal depends upon the way the class is seated. One rule is absolute and invariable, *the teacher ought to be able to see every pupil.* Seat your class so that you can. Put them in a circle about you if you cannot see them all in any other way. Stand while you teach if you cannot see all from your chair. However you do it, *see them.* Know everything that is going on. Read their faces. Learn from their expression who is paying attention and who is not, who has understood your teaching and who has failed to grasp it. It is often best for the teacher to determine, not simply the general form of seating, but the particular place where each pupil should sit. If each sits where he pleases, those are apt to get side by side who are most intimate, and there is likely to be more talking, inattention, and even mischief, than if you seated the class according to a plan of your own—alphabetically, let us say. You need not fear that the pupils will rebel, if only you go at it with a degree of common sense. It must not be as punishment for misbehavior, either of individuals or of the class as a whole. Arrange them at the beginning of the year's work. Make the assignment of seats a part of your general plan, not an after-thought or a corrective measure. Let the class feel it to be what it really is, an item of routine that makes for economy and efficiency.

*The teacher's own personality* may be a distraction. Anything that calls attention to *yourself* takes it away from the *subject.* Be natural. Avoid affectations and peculiarities. Nervous diffidence and overweening self-confidence are equally bad. Mannerisms of speech or gesture may spoil a lesson. An extreme new dress or hat may upset a class for a whole period. Remember that the fact that a pupil has his eyes fixed on you does not necessarily mean that he is absorbed in what you are saying.

> "A lady told me that one day, during a lesson, she was delighted at having captured so completely the attention of one of her young charges. He did not remove his eyes from her face; but he said to her after the lesson was over, 'I looked at you all the time, and your upper jaw did not move once!' That was the only fact that he had taken in." *

* James: "Talks to Teachers on Psychology," p. 93

*The teacher may introduce distractions* in the course of the teaching itself. To reprimand a pupil or to call for the attention of one whose mind you see to be wandering, is simply to make matters worse. You distract the class as a whole, and instead of one pupil not thinking of the lesson, you now have ten or twenty to win back. Teachers who use objects to illustrate the lesson must be especially careful. Do not bring out your objects too soon. They only distract attention if seen before they are actually used. And do not use them at all unless you are perfectly sure that they will work in just the way you plan. Stories and illustrations are to be avoided, too, that do not clearly illustrate or that are suggestive of other trains of thought than that of the lesson itself.

*The administrative department* of the Sunday school ought not in any way interrupt the teaching. The officers of a school may greatly hinder the effectiveness of its work if they go about their duties in such a way as to attract the attention of pupils. A superintendent may mean well, yet strut about importantly and confer with this person or that in more or less audible tones, till he creates more disorder and inattention than he can ever correct with the bell that such as he use for that purpose. The secretary may make himself the biggest nuisance in the school. He has no more right than anyone else to walk about during the teaching period, gathering class-books and collection envelopes, counting visitors or distributing lesson leaves and weekly papers. These things must be done, but a time should be set apart for them. The teaching period must be kept for teaching.

(2) *Know your lesson thoroughly.* It is not enough to remove distractions; you must make your teaching a positive attraction. You must fill the hour with interest. You must teach with power. And there is only one way to attain power in teaching. It is to begin at the very foundation—by first learning the truth you are to teach. To know his subject and to know it thoroughly, is the primary qualification of a teacher. What you do not have you cannot give. What you do not know you cannot teach. And unless you are at home in your subject, and master of its material, you cannot hope to teach interestingly.

This means that you ought to make *a definite and careful study of each lesson.* The teacher who relies upon his general knowledge, or upon his familiarity with a round of lessons that he has taught before, is bound to lose the interest of his pupils. The teacher who no longer feels the need of a special preparation of each lesson, might as well give up his class.

But it also means that you ought not to be content with the mere

getting together of the particular points you wish to discuss with the class. *A teacher needs to know a great deal more than he ever attempts to give to his pupils*, for sake both of perspective and interest. Professor Palmer has well expressed this need in his characterization of the ideal teacher. He is speaking primarily of his own experience as a college professor; but his words apply as well to teachers of every sort.

> "In preparing a lecture, I find I always have to work hardest on the things I do not say. The things I am sure to say I can easily get up. They are obvious and generally accessible. But they, I find, are not enough. I must have a broad background of knowledge which does not appear in speech. I have to go over my entire subject and see how the things I am to say look in their various relations, tracing out connections which I shall not present to my class. One might ask what is the use of this? Why prepare more matter than can be used? Every successful teacher knows. I cannot teach right up to the edge of my knowledge without a fear of falling off. My pupils discover this fear, and my words are ineffective. They feel the influence of what I do not say. One cannot precisely explain it; but when I move freely across my subject as if it mattered little on what part of it I rest, they get a sense of assured power which is compulsive and fructifying. The subject acquires consequence, their minds swell, and they are eager to enter regions of which they had not previously thought. . . . Even to teach a small thing well we must be large." *

(3) *Be yourself interested in the lesson.* You can teach nothing well that you have not made a real part of yourself. You can rouse no interest in that for which you do not yourself care. The pupil's attitude toward the truth is generally a reflection of your own. You must be earnest and sincere, enthusiastic and magnetic, if you would win your boys and girls. But these qualities are not to be acquired at will, or put on as one would a robe. They spring from the inward depths of the soul. They are rooted in your own secure possession of the truth which you seek to give to others only because it has first meant so much to yourself.

(4) *Find the "point of contact."* Know your pupils. Understand their experience and get into sympathetic touch with their interests. Look at the truth through their eyes. Present the lesson in terms

* Palmer: "The Teacher," p. 17.

drawn from their life, and adapt it to the needs they feel. In short, fulfill the conditions of apperception. So present the truth that they may both understand and welcome it. It is not enough simply to keep a class interested. Any entertainer could do that. You must get them interested in the right thing. You must bring into contact *the point of the lesson* on the one hand and *their wants and needs* on the other.

(5) *Keep alive.* Keep the discussion moving, and get somewhere. Avoid the dead monotony of a set routine. Adapt yourself to the exigencies of the moment, and grasp its opportunities.

Make your *subject* live. No dead, unchanging subject can ever hold the attention. The lesson must grow at your hands, and blossom out into new aspects and meanings.

Be alive to the *attitudes* of your pupils. Read their faces and postures. Know who is giving complete attention and whose mind is wandering, who is understanding and who is not; then fit your teaching to the conditions you face.

> "Every teacher greatly needs a quick eye and a comprehensive glance, which will take in the whole class at one view, or travel instantly from one part of it to the other. He should be able to detect the first rising of disorder, and the first symptoms of weariness, in an instant, and to apply a remedy to it the next instant. . . . Among the minor characteristics of a successful teacher, few things are so important as alacrity of movement; promptitude and readiness both in seeing and hearing; skill in finding out, at a moment's notice, who is the idlest boy in the class, and in giving him a question, or giving him a verse to read, before his mind becomes thoroughly alienated from the subject, and before the contagion of his example has had time to spread among the rest. A sluggish, heavy, inactive-looking teacher can never gain the sympathy of children, or keep up their attention long." *

Be alive to the *ideas* of your pupils. Get them to think for themselves and to express what they think. Then respect their thoughts. Take pains to understand them. Use them in the development of the truth. There will be many misconceptions and blundering statements, of course. But you will not treat them as one might the guesses at the answer to a conundrum—reject or accept them, and nothing more. Those very misconceptions are the material upon which you must

* Fitch: "The Art of Securing Attention," pp. 99, 100.

work. You will take them at their face value, as expressions of the pupil's real understanding of the matter in hand and his honest attempt to contribute to the discussion. You will lead him to see where they are wrong, and so to revise and correct them. A mistaken statement, expressing the pupil's own thought, is worth much more to you than a perfectly correct one which is only an echo of what you have told him or he has read in a book. It is your business, not to put ready-made ideas in at the pupil's ears and then pull them out again at his mouth, but to help him to construct right ideas of his own. *No class can have life and interest where the teacher's ideas are the only ones expressed or ultimately used.* There must be a real exchange of thought. The best teacher is he who can most skillfully use the pupil's own ideas.*

**6. The teacher should appeal to that interest whose apperceptive value is highest.** *Interesting* a pupil and getting him to *understand* the lesson should be one and the same thing. The interest to which the teacher appeals should be such as may help the pupil to grasp the truth and develop a right permanent attitude toward it. If a boy learns a Bible verse because he will get a "ticket" for it, ultimately redeemable in a prize, his interest neither helps him to understand the verse, nor begets within him an attitude toward the Bible that is permanently desirable. If the teacher tells a funny story or two "to get the class interested," and then plunges into a lesson discussion to which they apply but remotely, the class will remember the stories but not the teaching. In both these cases the interest appealed to is external. It bears no vital relation to the content of the lesson. The teacher seems to assume that the arousal of interest and the presentation of the lesson are separate problems.

But we fail unless we get the pupil interested *in the lesson itself.* And that means that we must translate the whole lesson material into terms of the pupil's own experience, that answer to his instincts and

*I once heard a teacher in the fourth grade of a city public school attempt to make her pupils understand the function of the nerves in the human body. "If your father were in Chicago," she said (it being several hundred miles distant), "and your mother wanted to get word to him right away, what would she do?" "Telephone"—at once cried a half dozen of the children. "Why, yes, that might do; but I am thinking of a better way," was the answer. None could think of the better way; and she finally had to tell them that she meant *telegraph.* She not only failed to use the pupils' own idea; she pressed upon them a poorer illustration than they had themselves suggested. Every child knew and used the telephone; few knew anything of the telegraph. She rejected an analogy of high apperceptive value for one little understood—and all because she could not adapt herself. She was not alive; she mechanically followed the plan she had thought out beforehand.

felt needs. We must do more than put a sugar-coat over an unchanged inner material; we must leaven the whole lump. Our problem is not to *make* a lesson interesting by tricks of method or by adding to it stories or other material pleasant but extraneous; it is to *bring out of each lesson its intrinsic interest.* *

There are times of extremity, of course, when the teacher has no choice. He is driven to appeal to *any* interest, however remote, that will give him access to the mind of the pupil. Such extremity may result from his own failure to bring out the essential interest of the lesson. Usually, however, it comes simply from the lack of that personal confidence and respect of the class for the teacher that underlies all effective teaching. The teacher just beginning work with an unruly gang of boys or with a self-satisfied, giggling bevy of girls, must win them first in any way he can. He may have to begin with something utterly foreign to the truth he means ultimately to bring out. The "point of contact" he first seeks is that between his pupils and himself; only later can he seek to make contact between their needs and a lesson point.

7. **Attention, interest, apperception, are but three aspects of one and the same mental process**—that, in short, is the point which this chapter seeks to make plain. Attention is a name for clear and definite mental activity; interest is its motive and apperception its result. Interest determines both the direction of attention and the meaning of that to which attention is paid. To know how to call forth the right interest is one of the vital secrets of effective teaching.

We cannot learn that secret all at once. But we shall be kept from many mistakes if we remember that *interest is more than a means which the teacher may employ; it is an end of education.* We must do more than *use* the pupil's interests to get his attention for a passing hour; the chief *aim* of our work is the development within him of a genuine, many-sided, comprehending interest in all those things of life that have real worth. Our pupils will likely forget every particular fact that we teach them; but the interests we have fed will remain. The teacher does well, therefore, to put to himself now and then the question, "Am I, or am I not, appealing to interests that I would have permanent, or that I can use in the development of worthy life attitudes?" If you can answer that question in the affirmative, and really get and hold the interest of your class, you are succeeding in your work.

* Cf. Dewey: "The Child and the Curriculum," p. 38.

## QUESTIONS

1. What do you understand by attention?

2. "Attention cannot be kept long upon an unchanging object"—why?

3. What two kinds of attention are distinguished in this chapter?

4. What do you understand by the "unstable equilibrium" of voluntary attention?

5. What is interest? Discuss the relation of interest and attention.

6. In what senses is attention an apperceptive process?

7. Why must the teacher get and hold the attention of his class?

8. Why is it a positive harm to teach without the attention of the class?

9. Discuss some of the distractions to attention which lie within the teacher's power to remove.

10. What positive conditions must the teacher fulfill if he would engage the interest of his class?

11. Why ought a teacher know more than he intends to present to his class?

12. What do you understand by the phrase "point of contact" as used in this chapter? What by "keeping alive"?

13. Why should the teacher appeal to that interest whose apperceptive value is highest?

## LESSON XVII

### Attention and Apperception: Methods

The last chapter dealt with principles; in this we shall seek to apply them. We shall consider some of the particular methods which the teacher may use to hold the attention and interest of his pupils and to help them understand the truth.

1. **Continuity.** By continuity we shall understand *the connection of lessons with one another.* The lessons should *have* connection—historical or logical; and the teacher should try to make the pupil see and understand it.

It is possible, of course, to present each lesson in and for itself. The lessons of a quarter or a year thus constitute a *mere* series—like a string of pearls, each in itself a finished work of art, but only *strung* together. But such a procedure involves a great waste of energy. It is poor economy to begin over again each Sunday, and to face anew the problem of engaging the interest of the class. Yet that is what the teacher does who fails to make clear the continuity of the lessons. The class may often enough compel you to begin anew the battle for interest; but you are foolish deliberately to plan to do so. *Strive to carry interest over from Sunday to Sunday.* Make each lesson lead up to the next and help set its problems. So teach that what the pupil gets may make him want more. Gather a headway of interest. Every day's teaching should make the next easier.

Teaching that lacks continuity, moreover, fails to realize one of the ends at which all teaching should aim. It fails to organize the truth within the mind of the pupil. He learns so many scattered stories and facts, moral maxims and spiritual truths; but never gets them put together, save in some haphazard fashion of his own. Much of what has been taught him will drop out of mind, simply for lack of connecting links with the rest of his knowledge; and the whole will lack perspective. *The teacher must help the pupil, not only to get ideas, but to systematize and unify them.* Organization is no less important than impression.

Three counsels are important, though obvious:

(1) *The work of organization must be done a bit at a time, week after week.* Do not wait until review Sunday, and expect to do it all then.

(2) *Make sure that the connection you teach is the real one.* You must *find* continuity in the Bible, not put it there. You have no right to substitute an imagined connection of your own for that which the lessons actually possess.

(3) *Study the whole before you attempt to teach the part.* Many Sunday school teachers study wrongly. They simply keep a week ahead of the class, or even—be it confessed with shame—right with the class. They live from hand to mouth, each week preparing just enough material to fill out the teaching period on the coming Sunday. They cannot rightly connect lesson with lesson in the mind of the pupil because their own vision is limited to the matter immediately in hand, with, perhaps, a glance ahead. *The teacher ought to know his whole subject before he begins to teach.* When you enter upon a new series of lessons—say the life of David or the history of the early Church—go over the whole ground. Get a plan for the series. You will then know how to plan each lesson, that it may not only be clear in itself, but contribute to the final organization of the truth.

2. **Correlation.** By correlation we shall understand *the connection of the Sunday school lessons with the rest of the pupil's education.* The teacher should not ignore, but build upon the work of the public schools.

Of all the ideas which the pupil will bring to bear upon your teaching, and which will determine its meaning for him, none are more easily accessible than those which he is acquiring day by day in the schools. That much of his experience at least you can get definitely acquainted with. You can find out just what ideas he has gotten, what stories he knows, what facts of history and science he has learned, what things he can and cannot do, what interests he has acquired. You can meet him then on common ground, and present the truth in ways that he will understand.

This does not mean that you are to use the *methods* of the public school, simply that you take account of the *ideas* it gives to your pupils and use them as an apperceptive basis. You will question the pupil about what he has already learned, and use his answers in the development of new truth. You will illustrate the lesson with stories that the school has made familiar. You will appeal to biography and history, and to his growing acquaintance with the facts of nature. You will connect Bible geography with that of the world at large.

*The advantages of such correlation* are: (1) It arouses the interest and self-activity of the pupil. It unites new and old within him. It makes him think, and gives him a chance to express himself and con-

tribute to the discussion. (2) It gives the class confidence in their teacher. Every item of correlation is to them so much evidence of the breadth and accuracy of his knowledge. (3) It begets within the pupil a sense of the unity of spiritual truth and material fact, of religion and the life of every day. (4) It actually brings about this unity, and so makes the truths learned in Sunday school more permanent and usable. We really possess ideas only in so far as we are able to call them up when needed; and that ability depends, we remember, upon the laws of association. To insure the permanence and future usefulness to the pupil of anything we teach, we must multiply its associations with other things—and with such things, be it marked, as he is apt often to meet or to have in mind. If the spiritual truths we teach in Sunday school are ever to count for much in the actual life of our pupils, we must not be content simply to connect the lessons with one another or to construct a system of doctrine that is internally self-consistent. We must reach out into the rest of knowledge and into life itself to make associations. We must, by question and illustration, by allusion and direct cross-reference, weave connections with the rest of the pupil's ideas. We must make religion an integral part of that larger organization of ideas and powers at which education aims as a whole.

*The dangers to be guarded against* are: (1) That of wandering from the point. It is easy to be led off into details of correlation, till the real point of the lesson is obscured. (2) That of a wrong attitude on the part of the pupil. He may dislike his school work; and your attempt at correlation may only succeed in transferring the dislike. Correlation is most valuable at those periods in the pupil's development when he is most interested in what he is learning at school. We have seen that middle childhood is such a period. Later adolescence is another, for those who are still in school or college and are laying hold of the great truths of science. In later childhood and early adolescence, on the other hand, school is often enough a bore. In any case, your problem is an individual one. You must find a "point of contact" for each pupil. (3) That of too little knowledge on your part. Do not attempt to correlate your teaching with that of the public school unless you know thoroughly just what your pupils are getting there. Otherwise they will soon find out that you do not know everything that you are talking about; and you will lose their confidence.

**3. Illustration.** There is no surer way to bring the truth home to the minds and hearts of those we teach than by effective illustration.

*The teacher needs the gift of imagination.* He must be able to *see* the truth concretely, and quick to conceive its analogies. Illustrations are of two great sorts—*stories* and *figures of speech.* Jesus used both. To teach the fatherhood of God He told the story of a prodigal son; to teach the brotherhood of man He told the story of a good Samaritan. He spoke of Himself as the "good shepherd," the "bread of life," the "stone which the builders rejected"; and of the relation of His disciples to Himself as that of "branches" to the "vine." He likened His service to a "yoke" that is "easy"; the spread of His kingdom to the growth of a "grain of mustard seed."

(1) *The illustration must be more familiar than the truth it is meant to illustrate.* It should be simple and concrete, dealing with matters that lie well within the range of the pupils' own experience. Its aim is to cast the light of the known upon the unknown. If it, too, deals with what is unknown, we simply double difficulties. Jesus always drew His illustrations from the common experiences of everyday life. It is one of the things that made Him the ideal Teacher.

We need to remember this principle even with respect to those illustrations which are recorded in the Bible itself. They reflect the life of Bible times and Bible lands. And because our life is different, we may not understand them. Missionaries have learned that they must put the truth in terms of the life of the people they address, even though it may compel a very free paraphrasing of the Scripture story.

> "One Sunday, in Ceylon, I was addressing, through an interpreter, a large congregation of native Christians, and unfortunately chose the subject of the good shepherd. My interpreter told me afterward that not one of my hearers had ever seen a sheep, or knew what it was. 'How, then, did you explain what I said?' I asked. 'Oh!' he replied, 'I turned it into a buffalo that had lost its calf, and went into the jungle to find it.'"*

It is a question how much a city child can get out of the many figures in the Bible which are drawn from pastoral life—a child who has seen sheep only in pictures, and knows nothing whatever of shepherds. A child, again, whose only experience of fishing has been gotten on an occasional picnic, will hardly comprehend the illustrations which Jesus used in teaching the fishermen whom he trained to be "fishers of men." Nor are children the only ones. We all fail often enough

* Canon Tristram, quoted by Du Bois: "The Point of Contact in Teaching," p. 91.

to grasp the point of some Bible figure because we lack real acquaintance with the life and thought-forms to which it appealed. The hyperbole, for example, of Jesus' remark when the rich young ruler "went away sorrowful," is utterly lost if we talk about a tiny gate called the "needle's eye" through which camels actually were forced, stripped of their loads. It need no more be literally true that camels go through the eye of a needle than that men "strain out the gnat and swallow the camel." The point is precisely that they do not. In both these cases Jesus probably made use of expressions that were common in His day. If we had been close enough to the everyday life of the people who made up Jesus' audiences, we should doubtless have heard men say "easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye" in just the same way as we used to say before the day of the Wrights, "I could no sooner do that than fly."

We must remember, moreover, that an illustration perfectly familiar and simple to ourselves may not be such to our pupils. It is from *their* standpoint that its effectiveness is to be judged.

> "I once heard a preacher explain hope to a number of children thus: 'Now, I will explain hope, so all these little girls can go home and tell their mothers what hope is. Now, children, you know that this beautiful stream of water that runs behind this meeting-house is composed of two elements, oxygen and hydrogen; so hope is composed of desire and expectation.' And on he went." *

This preacher gives an excellent example of what not to do. He not only uses a poor illustration, he tries to make up for its lack of simplicity by a sort of playful intimacy of manner and irrelevant remark. If he were a Sunday school superintendent, he would be the sort to stand up and deliver questions like this: "Now, what bright little boy or girl, on this beautiful crisp Sabbath morning, when I know you all must be feeling glad and happy and thankful to the good God who has given you sunshine and food and dear parents, can stand up real straight and fine and recite for me, without missing a word, the Golden Text?" Too many teachers are like him. They are convinced that they must get down to the plane of the child; and make the mistake of thinking they can do it by elephantine playfulness, needless remarks and a forced familiarity. They do more than get down to the plane of the child; they fall below it, and children are not slow to feel that fact. *The only way to get simplicity is to make the lesson material*

* "The Sunday School Teacher's Pedagogy," p. 106.

*itself simple, to find something in the child's own experience to which it may be likened, and so to develop the new on the basis of the old and familiar.*

This principle is so important that we may well stop to get another example:

> "I remember once hearing an address to children based upon the text, 'The little foxes that spoil the vines.' These little foxes were our small vices or weaknesses. Why did the speaker choose such a point of departure? I suppose 'the little foxes' had a simple, childlike sound about it to him, and seemed as though it would be easily a point of interest to little children. Perhaps it was, in so far as it aroused their curiosity. Whatever the children got out of the address, they got in spite of, rather than because of, the point of departure, which was not a point of contact with common experience. To very few children does a fox exist in more than name, if that; and the propensity of foxes for spoiling vines is one that they could not appreciate unless they had lived in a country where they had actually seen this kind of destruction wrought, or heard it talked about until it became a familiar fact." *

(2) *Illustrations should be natural, spontaneous and to the point.* Stories that impress one as being lugged in to keep things lively, figures that are strained and artificial, have no place. Illustration is not an end in itself, neither is it for sake of ornament. It is to help the pupil understand. If it does not really help, or is not needed, better cut it out.

(3) *It is a mistake to use too many illustrations.* Just enough to make the point clear and impress it strongly is the rule. And one illustration to a single point, if it be well chosen, is generally enough. If more be used, they are apt to confuse. On the other hand, care must be taken not to use the same illustration always for a given point, lest the pupil's conception of the truth be narrowed and distorted by constant association with one particular instance.

(4) *The illustration should not be incongruous.* It should not be more *unlike* than *like* the truth it is meant to picture. I once heard an evangelist speak of the "knock-out blow" that Christ gave to the church at Ephesus when He wrote to them through John: "Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love." And he was not content to leave it a metaphor; he made it a

* Du Bois: "The Point of Contact in Teaching" p. 85.

story, and launched into a vivid description of a certain disgusting prize-fight which had taken place a few months before, picturing how all that the beaten fighter had done through round after round was of no avail against that one blow that finally knocked him out.

(5) *The illustration should not be too suggestive.* It is but a window through which the truth is to shine. If it attracts attention to itself, it distracts the mind and clouds the vision. Some illustrations are too vivid and interesting. They start new and inviting trains of thought, and the pupil is soon far from the lesson.

> "A mission Sunday school was listening to a talk upon the fixedness of habits formed in youth, and to make it clearer the speaker said, 'Boys, do they ever lay cement walks in this neighborhood?' Every eye was riveted on him, as they answered, 'Yes!' 'Did you know,' he continued, 'that if you were to take a sharp-pointed stick and write your name in the cement while it was soft, it would harden and remain there as long as the walk lasted?' 'Of course,' he hastily added, as a significant expression appeared on their faces, 'no boy here would be mean enough to do such a thing;' but it was too late —the picture had done its work, and the purpose of handing autographs down to posterity would be executed at the first opportunity." *

4. **How to tell a story.** There are two standpoints from which we may judge a story. We may inquire, first, whether it is well told or worth telling, *just as a story, to be enjoyed;* second, whether it *teaches anything* or drives home a moral. As Sunday school teachers, we think of stories generally from the second of these standpoints, and it is our vice to neglect the first. But the truth is, that *the teaching value of a story depends upon its enjoyment value.* If it is not worth telling just as a story, or if it is poorly told, it will not fulfill its purpose as a bit of teaching.

A good story is, as Miss Bryant reminds us, a work of art.† It exists, primarily, to be enjoyed. Its worth is intrinsic. It claims attention for its own sake. We gaze in rapt wonder at a beautiful land-

* Lamoreaux: "The Unfolding Life," pp. 117, 118.

† Every teacher should be familiar with Miss Bryant's book on "How to Tell Stories to Children." Its title is too narrow. It really tells how to tell stories to anybody. The teacher of an adult class, who uses stories only for illustration, may profit from it as much as the teacher of children who must present every lesson in story form.

scape or a great picture, not for the sake of what we ultimately hope to get from either ; but simply because its beauty entrances our souls. So children and men alike love a good story, not because they seek from it an ulterior benefit, but because it fires the imagination and moves the feelings. Like landscape and picture, it has an appeal of its own. It just naturally grips us, we know not how or why.

*The teaching value of a well told story is thus indirect.* The pupil gives himself up to its enjoyment. Like a bit of play, it relaxes the tension of the classroom. There is no effort needed to hold the attention ; the story grips his interest, and he surrenders to it without reserve. It brings before him a mental picture, and stirs the heart within him. But at the end he has gotten more than a mere picture, and experienced what is deeper than an idle play of feeling—he has gained a concrete impression of the truth and has felt its power. Sir Joshua Fitch has brought this out admirably in his description of how Nathan taught David the greatest lesson of his life.

> "When Nathan was commissioned to reprove David, you know that if he had gone at once, and taxed him with the offence and said, 'You have committed a great sin, and I have come to rebuke you,' David would probably have been prepared with some answer. That was a form of accusation which he very likely anticipated, and we do not doubt he had so armed himself with pleas of self-justification, and so skillfully 'managed' his conscience, that the charge would scarcely have impressed him at all. But instead of this, the prophet began to tell him a narrative: 'There were two men in one city, the one rich and the other poor.' He went on further, as you know, detailing the various incidents of his story, until 'David's anger was greatly kindled against the man,' and he exclaimed, 'As the Lord liveth, the man that hath done this thing shall surely die.' Not till the solemn words, 'Thou art the man!' had been uttered in his hearing, did the conviction come thoroughly home to his heart that he was really guilty. Now, why was it that Nathan's method was so effective? *Because David had listened with interest to the story without supposing that it concerned him. His judgment was clear and unbiased, and he came to the right conclusion before he perceived that the conclusion applied to himself.* How much deeper and more permanent was the impression thus made than if the prophet had confined himself to a plain, literal examination of the right and wrong of David's own case. And we may see the same thing illustrated in our

Lord's parables constantly, that they not only chain the attention of the listener by their pictorial character, but they set him thinking for himself, and drawing inferences about truths of the highest value almost without being aware of it. *The most effective lessons which enter the human heart are not those which take the form of lessons. It is when we are least conscious of the process by which we are impressed that we are impressed most deeply.*" *

We now see the truth in President Hall's statement, before quoted, that story-telling is the most important of all things that a teacher should know how to do. It is a thing, moreover, that every teacher can learn to do. We are mistaken if we assume that the story-teller's gift is all inborn, and not to be cultivated.

(1) *To tell a story well one must prepare and practice it.* There are times, of course, when the inspiration of the moment gives both vision and power of expression. But he who relies upon such inspiration will miserably fail. Here, as everywhere, the secret of success is work.

(2) *To tell a story well, one must first possess it and make it a very part of himself.* He must possess it in *imagination.* He must really see the thing he hopes to make others see. He must possess it *logically*—grasping its point, and holding its details in right relation. He must possess it in *feeling*—putting his heart into the situation he describes. It is worse than useless to tell a story that you do not yourself appreciate and enjoy, or to try to move others to a sympathy you do not feel.

(3) *Reduce the story to its simplest terms.* Find the main plot, and let everything else go. Eliminate rigidly all unnecessary details, irrelevant incidents and secondary characters. Then tell the story in direct and simple language, and *in terms of action rather than of description.* "Tell what was done, not how somebody felt or thought when something was being done. . . . Those of us who have grown away from childhood tend to reverse the true order, to place the emphasis on the question, 'What kind of a man was he?' and not on 'What did he do?' Let what he did tell what he was. Your story will thus have 'go,' as all Bible stories have." †

(4) *Maintain logical unity and movement.* Nothing spoils a story so utterly as a confusion of points of view, or the failure to get some point

* Fitch: "The Art of Securing Attention," pp. 107, 108. Italics not in the original.
† Hervey: "Picture-Work," p. 41.

in at its rightful place, then backing up later to supply it. No story-teller ought ever to be obliged to stop and say, "Oh! I forgot to tell you that—."

(5) *Use direct discourse.* When you tell what somebody said use the first person instead of the third. Note the confusion and obscurity of the indirect form of telling the story of the Good Samaritan: "And then when he left he gave the innkeeper some money, and told *him* to take care of *him*, and *that* if *he* spent any more for *him*, *he* would repay *him*."

(6) *Put your whole self into the telling.* This is the hard thing for most people. The difference between a good story-teller and a poor one is most often a difference of temperament. The first naturally and spontaneously expresses what he feels; the second is ashamed and afraid to let himself go. The one is naturally dramatic; the other diffident and reserved. To tell a story well, you must really act it out, in changes of voice inflection, in expression of eyes and feature, in quiet gesture. Anything more than this, however, is out of place, and but calls attention to the incongruity of the present situation with that which the teller is attempting too realistically to portray.

> "To all who are not by nature bodily expressive I would reiterate the injunction—not to pretend. Do nothing you cannot do naturally and happily. But lay your stress on the inner and spiritual effort to appreciate, to feel, to imagine out the tale; and let the expressiveness of your body grow gradually with the increasing freedom from crippling self-consciousness. The physique will become more mobile as the emotion does. The expression must, however, always *remain suggestive rather than illustrative.* This is the side of the case which those who are over-dramatic must not forget. The story-teller is not playing the parts of his stories; he is merely arousing the imagination of his hearers to picture the scenes for themselves." *

5. **Pictures** have a threefold value as illustrative material:

(*a*) *Sense value.* Appealing to the eye as well as to the ear, the teacher is better able to attract the attention and hold the interest of the pupil. The impression through both senses is stronger than through either alone.

(*b*) *Fact value.* Seeing gives more definite knowledge than hearing. "I had heard of thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth thee." Pictures help to make Bible scenes real, and give

* Bryant: "How to Tell Stories to Children," p. 102.

material to the imagination. The pupil's ideas become more concrete and definite, his *mental pictures* clearer.

(*c*) *Ideal value.* The pictures of a great artist do more than represent facts; they present ideals. They give insight into life's spiritual meanings, and uplift the heart to higher levels of feeling. The Sistine Madonna is not a photograph of Jesus and His mother; but it is more. We do not know whether it reproduces the features of Mary; but it does what is of infinitely more moment—it reveals to us her spirit. It is the eternal spirit of motherhood, with all its love and joy in suffering, its beauty and dignity. That is no mere picture of a particular person; it portrays that which is universal to humanity. It is the picture of the Ideal Mother.

The Sunday school has always used pictures; but it has at times relied too exclusively upon the first of these values. It has used such pictures as would appeal to the senses, without sufficient regard for their faithfulness to fact or for their artistic and ideal value. The result has been the common use of great charts or pictures, one for each lesson, crudely drawn and splotched over with garish color. We have now come, however, to see that children are just as ready to enjoy good pictures as poor ones; and that we need lose nothing of the appeal to the senses by striving as well for the fact and ideal values. It is now possible, moreover, to obtain copies of good pictures so cheaply that there is no excuse for compelling children to look at poor ones.

(1) *The pictures of great artists* are worth more than any other, for the reason that they combine all three values. Even a child sees more than faces when he looks at such pictures as Hofmann's "Christ in the Temple with the Doctors," "Christ and the Rich Young Man," and "Christ in Gethsemane." He is able to read the heart beneath. We owe it to our children to bring them into contact with the best pictures as well as with the best books, and to make them able to appreciate the spiritual values of art. No one has a better opportunity to do this than the Sunday school teacher; and few things that he can do will better quicken and develop the spiritual capacities of the pupil. It is significant how the world's greatest artists have turned to the Bible for their subjects. The life of Christ particularly is well portrayed by modern painters, whose conception of Him is in general better suited to our present ways of thinking than that of many of the old masters.

(2) *Photographs* of Palestine as it exists to-day, of its people and their occupations, help very much to make real to pupils the scenes and circumstances of the Bible story.

(3) *Stereoscopic views* are better yet. Shut off by the hood from the world of here and now, the boy who looks through a stereoscope seems really transported into Bible lands. The picture stands out in all the perspective of the third dimension, and its figures even seem life-size.

(4) Any Sunday school that can afford it should have a *stereopticon* for use in reviews, illustrated lectures, and the like, before the whole school or before a single class at some special meeting. The possibilities of such illustration are now greatly increased by the use of reflectors which throw upon the screen a page of any book with its print, diagrams or pictures, just as clearly as the old lantern would a prepared slide. In this way the teacher may make available to the class a great amount of material which they would otherwise never get.

(5) Schools and colleges are just awaking to the possibilities of *moving pictures* as an educational instrument. The Sunday school, too, would do well to bring before its pupils now and then moving pictures of the Passion Play, of scenes in the Holy Land of to-day, of scenes illustrating missionary work in foreign lands, and the like. The craze for moving picture shows which has in the past few years spread over the country is but an indication of the interest which pupils are bound to feel in pictures which actually bring life before them.

6. **Objects** as illustrative material have both a *sense* and a *fact* value. In dealing with young children especially, the appeal to the senses is needed to hold their attention and interest and to make the needed impression. For pupils of all ages, there is great value in objects or models that help to make more real the conditions about which the class is studying. Relics of ancient times or articles from the Palestine of to-day or from mission fields, help to give a definite knowledge that could be gotten in no other way.

(1) *We must carefully distinguish, however, between those objects whose relation to the truth we teach is merely symbolic, and those whose relation is real.* A Roman coin, an old Greek lamp, models of the temple or of the agricultural implements or clothes of Bible times, a model house to show how Peter could go "up upon the house top to pray," or how a sick man could be let down into a room from the roof—these have a real relation to the truth. From such objects we get both sense and fact values. But to use a crown to illustrate the "crown of life," a magnifying glass to explain Mary's joy as expressed in the Magnificat, a paper pattern and scissors as a

symbol of Christ our pattern, is to appeal to the senses merely, and to run grave risk of a misapprehension of the truth. There is always danger that children will not understand our figures of speech; and we more than double the danger when we present the figure in object form, because of the greater strength with which the object itself will enchain their interest and attention and tie their minds down to its literal presence and quality.*

(2) *If symbolic objects be used as illustrations*—and there are doubtless times when it is well to use them, despite the danger involved—*they must conform to the general principles of effective illustration noted earlier in this chapter.* They must be natural, not forced; they must be more familiar than the truth to be illustrated; they must not be incongruous or too suggestive. Perhaps the most common of all "object-lessons" is the use of chemicals by which a colorless liquid turns red when another is poured into it, and becomes clear as crystal again when a third is introduced—it all being supposed to illustrate the effect of sin upon the heart and its purification by the love of God. But such a procedure transgresses the most fundamental principle of teaching. The illustration is not more familiar than the truth to be illustrated. It attempts to explain the unknown by the unknown. It is very apt, moreover, to convey to children a wrong implication—that the operation of God's Spirit is as instantaneous and magical in its character as the change in the liquid appears to them.

(3) *The use of symbolic objects takes time and compels a more or less definite centering of the whole lesson about them.* Such an illustration is much less economical than one that is verbal. There is always the danger that the illustration may become an end in itself rather than a means.

(4) *There is a danger that object teaching may degrade the interests of the children by holding them to a sense plane.* Children who have been taught too exclusively by objects become incapable of appreciating anything else. They will always demand "something interesting," else they will not give attention.

> "It had seemed to Miss Bessie advisable that the 'children should know something of the world on which they live,' and for purposes of instruction she had selected a geyser and a volcano as important—not to say interesting—features of land structure. By means of a rubber ball with a hole in it, artfully

* See the address by Miss Williams, quoted in Du Bois' "Point of Contact in Teaching," pp. 95–99, from which several of the examples used above are taken. Note also what was said about the child's symbolism in Lesson III. of this book.

concealed in a pile of sand, she had created a geyser, and with a bit of cotton soaked in alcohol and lighted she had simulated a volcano. We began our work with geography in ignorance of these facts. After a few lessons on hills, mountains, islands, capes and bays, the children informed us that they 'didn't like those old things.' 'Please, won't you give us the fireworks?' asked Freddie. 'Or the squirt?' added Agnes eagerly."*

7. The **blackboard** is a very important help, which has been much misunderstood and misused. Teachers have often seemed to regard it as the puzzle department of the Sunday school. The real puzzle is to understand how the custom ever got started of attempting to teach religious truths by a jumble of symbols, alliterative enigmas and rebuses.

*The true use of the blackboard is "free, living and personal."*† A rapid descriptive sketch, an outline map or diagram, an important word or principle written as well as spoken—such is true blackboard illustration, done as the teacher talks, reinforcing the impression of ear with that of eye. If possible, every class should have its own blackboard; for it is as a help in actual teaching that it is most needed —not merely for announcement, review or ornament.

* Carter: "The Kindergarten Child—After the Kindergarten," *Atlantic Monthly*, March, 1899.

† Hervey: "Picture Work,"

## QUESTIONS

1. Why should there be continuity in teaching?

2. Why should the teacher study the whole of a series of lessons before he begins to teach them?

3. What are the advantages of correlation of the Sunday school lessons with the rest of the pupil's education? What are the dangers to be guarded against in such correlation?

4. Discuss the principles of effective illustration—brought out in this chapter.

5. What difficulty do we meet in using the illustrations of the Bible itself?

6. When is an illustration incongruous? When too suggestive?

7. What is meant by the statement that the teaching value of the story is indirect? Why is this true?

8. What are the principles of good story telling set down in this chapter?

9. What values do pictures have as illustrative material?

10. What sorts of pictures are usable in the Sunday school? Discuss the value of each.

11. What are the advantages of object teaching? What dangers must be guarded against?

12. What is the distinction between objects whose relation to the truth is symbolic and those whose relation is real?

13. Discuss the proper use of the blackboard.

## LESSON XVIII

### Questions

There is one other qualification of a teacher quite as important as to be able to tell a story—*to know how to ask questions.* By stories and other illustrative material the teacher may present the truth clearly and vividly, and appeal to interest and imagination, to feeling and action; but it is by questions that he stirs his pupils to think it over for themselves, to digest and assimilate it and to make it a permanent mental possession. If the story is the most effective means of *presentation*, the question is the great instrument of *association.* It is the means by which the teacher arouses the pupil himself to mental activity.

1. **Kinds of questions.** Questions may best be classified according to the use to which they are put. We may distinguish six kinds:

(1) *Preparation questions*—those used in the step of preparation. They aim (*a*) to bring up within the pupil's mind such ideas as he may already possess concerning the truth to be taught, or such as will enable him rightly to apprehend it; (*b*) to make him feel the need of more knowledge, and so to arouse his interest and give a motive for the work of the hour.*

(2) *Recitation questions* seek to test the pupil's mastery of the material assigned for study and to bring out clearly its essential facts.†

(3) *Development questions* seek to lead the pupil to think about the facts he has learned, to inquire into their relations and values, to infer from them other facts and truths, and to form ideas and judgments of his own. This is pre eminently the question of the discussion method. It deals with the organization of facts. ‡

(4) *Review questions* have a twofold aim: (*a*) to freshen and strengthen impressions already made; (*b*) to organize them into a larger mental whole.

(5) *Examination questions* should serve (*a*) as a test of the pupil's knowledge; (*b*) as a motive to its better organization.

* See the discussion of the step of preparation, Lesson XIV., Section 5.

† See what was said about the recitation method in Lesson XIII., Section 2.

‡ See the treatment of the discussion method in Lesson XIII., Section 3, and of the step of association in Lesson XIV., Section 4.

(6) *Personal questions* are those that make a direct appeal to the will, search the heart and arouse the conscience. Many of Jesus' questions were such: "But who say ye that I am?" "Simon, son of John, lovest thou me?"

2. **How to ask questions.** Questioning is an art, and like all arts can be but imperfectly embodied in rules. Yet there are certain general characteristics of good questions that may be set down.*

(1) **The question should be clear and definite.** It should ask only one thing, and that so directly that there is no chance of mistake.

(*a*) *Avoid technical expressions and big words;* as, What are the conditions of sanctification, and how does it differ from regeneration? Does the divinity of Jesus imply His impeccability? In the Sunday school at least, we need to get away from artificial and technical terminology. If religion means to us what it ought, we can express it in the same language that we use for common, every-day matters. That is what Jesus did. "The common people heard Him gladly." He always drew the materials for his teaching from the life about Him. And the apostles and evangelists followed His example. In late years scholars have found out that many Greek words which were once supposed to be peculiar to the New Testament, belonged in fact to the language of the common people, the colloquial Greek of the day.† The Bible was written so that the ordinary man could understand it.

(*b*) *Avoid figures of speech*, unless the question itself deal with their explanation. Use the most simple and direct statement possible. Do you think the penitent thief will be present at the marriage supper of the Lamb? In what sort of ground did Paul sow the seed at Corinth?—are examples of questions made less definite than they might be, because a figure of speech is used to express what could be put in literal terms. We make it worse, of course, if we mix figures; as, How does the Good Shepherd wash away sin?

(*c*) *Do not ask questions that are vague because they admit of many answers.* A teacher once asked, "What must we do before our sins can be forgiven?"—and a little girl replied quite correctly, "We must

* The art of questioning has been well treated by Sir Joshua Fitch in the "Art of Questioning," and by Professor De Garmo, in chapter xiv. of "Interest and Education." We can do little more than attempt to apply to our specific purpose the principles they have brought out. De Garmo's very concrete discussion is of especial value.

† Deissmann: "Light from the Ancient East," pp. 54-142. See also Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible, article on "Language of the New Testament."

sin first." Such a question as How did Saul treat David? needs qualification. Put thus, it might be answered in many ways: Made him court minstrel, appointed him armor-bearer, gave him his daughter in marriage, grew jealous of him, tried to kill him, drove him into outlawry, swore to a covenant with him at En-gedi.

(*d*) *Avoid double questions.* These may be of various sorts. The least objectionable are those which *unite two questions, each of which is in itself legitimate;* as, Of whom did Saul become jealous, and why? Ask both questions, but ask one at a time. A more serious fault is the *assumption as premise of that which is itself questionable;* as, Why cannot a man sin who lets Christ enter his heart? Why did Paul fail at Athens? There are prior questions here: *Does* faith in Christ make it impossible for a man to sin? *Did* Paul fail at Athens? Ask these first; then the others may rightly follow. The poorest of all questions are those which *ask so much that they give an inadequate clue as to what is asked.* Examples are: Who killed a thousand men with what strange weapon? Who, in to-day's lesson, was coming into what city, and how? These are not questions; they are conundrums. Yet interrogations of this sort are by no means uncommon. Professor De Garmo quotes this from a list of examination questions, actually used in a secondary school: "Who chased whom around the walls of what?"*

(*e*) *Do not confuse the pupil by a multitude of words, by auxiliary clauses and parenthetical explanations.* Example: Do you think that in the days of the Judges, when as you know there was no king, and the Bible says that "every man did that which was right in his own eyes," the Levitical code was in force or any centralized worship observed, such as that of the tabernacle is reported to have been in the days of Moses, and that of the temple became in the later kingdom, especially in view of the fact that Gideon is said to have set up an image in his own house (you will remember, too, how Micah hired a private priest, and the Danites stole both his image and his priest, and also that Jephthah offered his own daughter as a sacrifice, though the sacrifice of children is forbidden both in Leviticus and in Deuteronomy)? Under this head may be included also the habit referred to in the last chapter, of attempting to put life into the teaching by superfluous remarks and playful familiarity. Nowhere is this more out of place than in asking questions.

(*f*) *A common source of vagueness is the use, without qualification, of general and indefinite verbs,* such as have, do, be, become, happen.

* De Garmo: "Interest and Education," p. 183.

Examples: What *happens* when you tell a lie? What do you *do* when you go to bed? What did Abel *have* that Cain did not? What *is* the new name that is promised to him that overcometh? What do we *become* when we are baptized?

(2) **The question should be so put as to stimulate real thought.** The pupil should be compelled to go to his *ideas* for the answer.

(*a*) *Avoid questions that suggest the answer* in any such way that it comes as the result of the merely mechanical working of the laws of association.

Yes-and-no questions are usually to be avoided for this reason, though they are sometimes perfectly legitimate. The test is—do they make the pupil *think?*

> "Nineteen such questions out of twenty carry their own answers in them; for it is almost impossible to propose one without revealing, by the tone and inflection of the voice, the kind of answer you expect. For example: Is it right to honor our parents? Did Abraham show much faith when he offered up his son? Do you think the author of the Psalms was a good man? Were the Pharisees really lovers of truth? Questions like these elicit no thought whatever; there are but two possible answers to each of them, and of these I am sure to show, by my manner of putting the question, which one I expect. Such questions should therefore, as a general rule, be avoided, as they seldom serve any useful purpose, either in teaching or examining. For every question, it must be remembered, ought to require an effort to answer it; it may be an effort of memory, or an effort of imagination, or an effort of judgment, or an effort of perception; it may be a considerable effort or it may be a slight one; but it must be an effort; and a question which challenges no mental exertion whatever, and does not make the learner think, is worth nothing."*

"Pumping" questions appeal to mere mechanical memory or to guessing. Example: James and John were—? Brothers. And they were sons of —? Thunder. No, they were called that; but they were really the sons of Z—? Zacchæus. No, Zeb—? Zebedee.

When two or more words go together to form one idea, they should not be broken apart, putting one in the question to suggest the other in the answer. Examples: What did Samuel offer when he went to Jesse's home? Sacrifice. What did Jesus cast out? Demons. What

* Fitch: "The Art of Questioning," pp. 68, 69.

did Jesus break with His disciples? Bread. What did He give first? Thanks.

The question should not be asked in the same words that were used for the original presentation of the truth asked for; nor should the teacher ever be content to get back an answer in the same words that he used to impart it. Such an exercise proves that the pupil caught the *words* of the teaching, but it does not show that he got the *idea*. Put the question in terms that cannot subconsciously suggest the words needed to meet it; insist that the pupil answer in language of his own. One application of this principle must be made explicit. *Do not use the words of Scripture in your questions.* Sir Joshua Fitch gives so good an illustration that we must quote it at length:

> "*A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead.* Some teachers would proceed to question thus: Who is this parable about? *A certain man.* Where did he go from? *Jerusalem.* Where to? *Jericho.* What sort of people did he fall among? *Thieves.* What did they do with his raiment? *Stripped him of it.* What did they do with the man himself? *Wounded him.* In what state did they leave him? *Half dead.* Observe here that the teacher has covered the whole area of the narrative, and proposed a question on every fact; so far he has done well. But it is to be noticed that every question was proposed as nearly as possible in the words of the book, and required for its answer one (generally *but* one) of those words. Now it is very easy for a boy or girl, while the echoes of the Bible narrative just read still linger in the ear, to answer every such question by rote merely, with scarcely any effort of memory, and no effort of thought whatever. . . . Let us go over the same subject again, first introducing it by one or two preliminary questions; for example: Who used these words? To whom were they spoken? Why were they uttered? Repeat the question which the lawyer asked. What is the parable about? *A man who went on a journey.* What do you call a man who goes on a journey? *A traveler.* In what country was the man traveling? *Judea.* Let us trace his route on the map. In what direction was he traveling? *Eastward.* Through what kind of country? (Here the teacher's own information should supply a fact or two about its physical features.) What should you suppose

from the lesson was the state of the country at that time? *Thinly peopled; road unfrequented*, etc. How do you know this? *Because he fell among thieves.* Give another expression for 'fell among.' *Happened to meet with.* Another word for 'thieves.' *Robbers.* How did the robbers treat this traveler? *They stripped him of his raiment.* What does the word 'raiment' mean? *Clothes.* Besides robbing him of his clothes, what else did they do? *Wounded him.* Explain that word. *Injured him; hurt him very much*, etc. How do you know from the text that he was much hurt? *They left him half dead. They almost killed him.* Now observe here that the aim has been twofold. First, not to suggest the answer by the form of the question. Hence another sort of language has been adopted, and the children have therefore been made to interpret the Biblical language into that of ordinary life. Secondly, not to be satisfied with single words as answers, especially with the particular word which is contained in the narrative itself, but always to *translate* it into one more familiar." *

(*b*) *Be careful not to encourage guessing.* Questions that suggest their own answers are one extreme; questions so vague that the answer must be guessed at are the other. Either is destructive of real thought. Look carefully to the form of the question. Make it perfectly definite and unequivocal. It should permit of but one correct answer. Yet if that answer be not forthcoming, it is idle to keep putting the question in the hope that repetition may coax it out. And it is worse than idle to reject an answer that is honest and partly right, just because it does not chance to be the one of which you are thinking. Teachers exist who have been known to say, "Yes, you are right; but it is not the answer that I have in mind." "Yes, that is true; but it is not what I meant." Pupils are not mind readers. Make your question express what you mean; do not compel them to guess at it. The class so treated will soon get into the habit, when a question is asked, of wondering *what the teacher wants them to say*, instead of trying to answer *what he really does ask.* And when that state has been reached, the teacher had better quit questioning and examine himself.

We dare never forget that we ask questions, not just for sake of getting correct answers, but for sake of leading the pupil to think, to know and understand the truth. A wrong answer is often more useful

* Fitch: "The Art of Questioning," pp. 63-65.

than a right one. If it reveals the pupil's real thought about the matter in hand, and so shows us his misconception of the truth, it is of far more value than a perfectly correct guess or veneer of memory. It enables us to diagnose the case. It gives us insight into the pupil's need, and we can set to work to meet it.

(*c*) *Give the pupil a chance to think for himself.* Let him answer questions in his own way.

> "One should refrain from tripping the pupil with disconcerting questions. A race over obstacles may be diverting, but it does not conduce to steady advance. It is even better to permit the pupil to blunder through to the end of his recitation than to interrupt him perpetually with questions calculated to obstruct the current of his thought. Sometimes teachers are so impatient to obtain immediate results that they find it impossible to wait." *

Such over-questioning defeats its own end. It takes away the pupil's self-activity. It weakens his power of thought and expression. It makes him dependent upon the continual stimulus of questions.

(3) **Questions should deal with essentials.** For sake of perspective, do not ask for unimportant details. To ask a question emphasizes the thing asked for. It becomes the center of thought for the moment. It gets impressed upon the pupil's mind and acquires dignity and importance in his eyes. It is one of the chief functions of the question, therefore, to direct attention to the salient facts of the lesson and to guide the thought of the pupil to its essential truths.

*The question itself, moreover, should have apperceptive and associative value.* The question and its answer should be worth putting together. It is possible to ask about an important fact in a very unimportant way. For example: What did Jesus do next? What truth do we find in the next verse? What story did Jesus tell in to-day's lesson? What miracle was performed in last Sunday's lesson? What important truth does the editor bring out in the practical suggestions at the bottom of the page? Such questions as these are formal and meaningless. The facts they point toward may be of vital importance; but what they actually ask about those facts is not worth mentioning, much less remembering.

The fitting together of question and answer is a golden opportunity to make an association. Interest is alert, attention centered upon its problem, the mind active. It is the time to put together the things we

* De Garmo: "Interest and Education," p. 203.

would have stay together in the pupil's mind. But no teacher is foolish enough to want his pupils to hold the idea of "to-day's lesson" in memory together with the story of the Good Samaritan, or to preserve the thought that it was on the bottom of the page that a certain truth was brought out. He is wasting energy, therefore, and missing opportunities, to put such questions at all.

Question and answer should be parts of a single whole of meaning. They should be worth putting together and keeping together. *The question should supply the one term, the answer the other, of an association that has permanent value.* What did Jesus do when He saw that His disciples would not wash one another's feet? What story did He tell when a lawyer asked Him whom to consider a neighbor? What miracle did He perform at a wedding in Cana of Galilee? What great truth does the story of the Sower bring out?—are forms that have associative value.

(4) **Questions should be put in logical order.** This is only to say that each should fall into its place in the development of the lesson. All that has been said concerning the necessity of a lesson plan applies as well to the questions a teacher asks, as to the truths he means to bring out or the illustrative material he uses. Each question should grow out of what went before it, and lead up to what comes after. The whole should issue in a coherent presentation of the truth. It is harder to keep to the point, of course, when questions are asked and the discussion of the hour is live and generally cooperative, than it would be if the teacher were to do all the work and simply deliver a carefully prepared lecture. But it can be done.

(5) **Questions should be so put as to keep the whole class interested and at work.** Aside from their content, this depends upon a few simple rules of method:

(*a*) *Do not rely upon concert answers.* It is one of the surest ways *not* to keep the whole class at work. You must bring the questions home individually. Call upon particular pupils to answer.

(*b*) *Ask the question first, then call upon the one who is to answer.* Each member of the class should feel that the question is addressed to him, since he may be called upon to answer it.

(*c*) *Call upon particular pupils several times in the course of a single recitation.* Do not let a pupil feel that after he has answered his question, made his report or discussed his topic, his work is over for the day.

(*d*) *Do not repeat a question if the pupil failed to understand it because of inattention.* Go to another for the answer. Even if the

failure is due to inability to understand its meaning, it is best to let someone else answer ; then recast and explain it if necessary.

(*e*) *Do not repeat the pupil's answer.* The class should be trained to pay as careful attention to one another's answers as to the teacher's questions and explanations.

(*f*) *Do not get into the habit of calling most often upon your best pupils, and letting the weaker sit idle.* We face a dilemma here. The weaker pupils need the questions most ; yet when we call upon them the class hour drags and the discussion loses its interest. We need the help of the brighter pupils to keep things moving, and they deserve the chance to contribute to the development of the truth ; yet we must not neglect the weaker.

(*g*) *Do not let pupils get into the habit of failing to answer your questions, and become content to fail.* Never give one up, or let him feel that his case is hopeless. Keep at him till you find a "point of contact." Your work is, like that of any teacher, individual. You ought never be content with only the ninety and nine.

(6) **The questions should maintain the social motive of the hour.** We have seen that the ideal method of teaching is cooperative,* and that the pupil's expression of that which is within him depends upon the social situation in which he finds himself.† In the next chapter we shall consider the class as a social institution. There is need here only to mention the bearing of this social motive upon questions.

(*a*) Asking and answering questions should be no formal or artificial exercise. It should express *the natural give and take of social cooperation in the discovery and discussion of the truth.* It follows that you ought to do all you can to encourage freedom of thought and expression. You will respect the pupil's answers, if they be sincere. You will not meet with ridicule or impatient sarcasm the blunders of a boy who is really trying. You will recognize, moreover, that pupils too have a right to ask questions, and will do your best honestly and squarely to meet their difficulties.

(*b*) *To ask questions from a printed list in the text-book, or even to read off questions that you have yourself prepared, is to fail unpardonably.* You ought to be able to look into the eyes of your pupils, and to talk with them as a man with his friends. This does not mean that you need not prepare questions. You ought to study carefully, not simply the lesson itself, but how best to question your class about it.

* Lesson XIII., Sections 2, 3 and 4.
† Lesson XV., Section 1.

And it is well to write out some of the questions, that you may get them clearly in mind. But all this must be done beforehand. Leave your notes behind when you come to the class. Let no paper come between you and your pupils. Better to make a few mistakes in the course of teaching that is live and personal than to be faultlessly logical because mechanical.

(*c*) *The social motive gives us a concrete test for the application of our rules.* Like all others, they have exceptions. "It is too much to demand a complete sentence for every answer, for what is good form in social intercourse is not bad form in the school-room." * Not all yes-and-no questions are illegitimate. The test is always, *are we maintaining a real exchange of ideas, and giving expression to them in genuine social ways?*

3. **Reviews.** All Sunday schools have review Sundays; but not nearly all teachers know how to use them. The common mistake is to use the review simply to refresh the pupil's memory. *But mere repetition is not review. It is for the sake of organization and perspective that we look back over the lessons of a series.* The pupil, having gotten the whole, is now able to see the parts in right relation. He can now understand the bearing of particular events and lessons upon one another, and is prepared to unify and systematize his ideas.

Any method of review that will accomplish this work of organization is legitimate. It will *not* be accomplished by a mere recital of the title, golden text, chief events and "central truth" of each lesson in turn. It may be by a talk by teacher or superintendent, illustrated by blackboard, stereopticon or pictures. It may be by assigning questions or topics to pupils, and discussing their reports. It may be by getting pupils to make out their own outline of the series, or to write a short history of the period covered, a little drama representing some of its events, or an essay upon some assigned topic that presupposes an intelligent knowledge of the whole. It may be by giving them an examination. The ingenuity of the teacher will devise a hundred ways to engage the interest of his class in a review, if only he once gets the idea that it is for organization rather than for repetition. Indeed, if the teacher has rightly used the principle of continuity throughout the series, there is no line to be drawn between the methods of every lesson and those of review. The review simply completes the work which he has been trying to do every Sunday.

4. **Examinations** are so much misunderstood and misused in public school and college that most teachers do not even think of their use in

* De Garmo: "Interest and Education," p. 193.

the Sunday school. Their function is conceived to be that merely of *testing* the pupil's knowledge. But if this were their only value, they might well be dispensed with. Any teacher can tell without them what progress his pupil has been making, what work he is prepared to do next, and so whether he deserves promotion. If a teacher cannot, there is something wrong with him.

*The true function of the examination, like that of the review, is the organization of the pupil's knowledge.* The examination is given, not for the teacher's sake, but for the pupil's. It supplies a motive for thorough work and a stimulus to final organization, that can be secured in no other way. And if the examination questions be rightly put, they in themselves constitute points of view which almost compel a true perspective.

> "The function of the examination as a test of the pupil's knowledge is not of paramount importance, but its function as *an organizing agency of knowledge* is supreme. . . . The virtue of the examination lies in its power to *force* strenuous mental effort to the task of organizing a large body of facts and principles into a coherent system. This is the standard by which examination questions should be set. They should be large and comprehensive, so formulated that they will bring out and exercise, not the memory for details, but the capacity to grasp large masses of knowledge and weld the separate facts and principles into systematic unities." *

If this be the function of the written examination, it is as much needed in the Sunday school as in the public school. Indeed, it is more needed. "Just because the public school can use certain methods which are impracticable in the Sunday school for securing faithful work day by day, it could conceivably more easily than the Sunday school dispense with examinations." †

We need not fear that examinations will be unpopular and drive pupils from school, if we administer them with a degree of common sense.

> "At first, at least, the examination may be made optional, no pupil being obliged to take them, but all being encouraged to do so. . . . The examination should not cover a long period, probably not to exceed three months, though when the system

* Bagley; "The Educative Process," pp. 333, 334.

† Burton and Mathews: "Principles and Ideals for the Sunday School," p. 158.

is fairly under way an annual examination might be given for those who are willing to take it. If the lessons call for written work each week, the work thus done week by week should be taken into account in the examination. The quarterly examination should not be a mere test of memory. Its educational purpose should be distinctly kept in mind. If the questions are rightly framed, so as to constitute a real review of the main features of the quarter's work, they may very properly be put into the hands of the pupils on one Sunday, to be returned with the answers a week later, the pupils being instructed to make use of the Bible and any other accessible sources of information, personal help only being excluded." *

Examination papers should always be carefully corrected, graded and handed back. Some sort of recognition should be given to those who pass examinations creditably—a list announced or posted, promotion to a higher class, a certificate given for each examination passed, or a diploma at the completion of a course covering several years of work. So conducted, examinations will be welcomed by most pupils. And they will help wonderfully to rescue the educational work of the Sunday school from the indefiniteness, lack of motive and low level of intellectual vigor which too often characterize it.

* Burton and Mathews: "Principles and Ideals for the Sunday School," pp. 159, 160.

## QUESTIONS

1. Classify questions according to the use to which they are put. State the aim of each class of questions.

2. What six great requirements must good questioning conform to?

3. Why should technical expressions and big words be avoided in putting questions?

4. Why should the question contain no figures of speech?

5. Illustrate the different forms of double questions. Show why each is objectionable.

6. What are some of the ways in which a question may wrongly suggest its own answer?

7. In Fitch's illustration of a lesson about the parable of the Good Samaritan, point out the differences between the right and the wrong way of asking questions.

8. What are some of the ways in which the teacher may encourage his pupils to guess at answers to his questions?

9. What do you understand by the requirement that a question should have apperceptive and associative value?

10. Describe some devices of method by which the teacher may retain the interest and attention of the whole class as he asks questions.

11. Why should the pupil be permitted to ask questions?

12. Why is it wrong to ask questions from a printed or written list?

13. What is the function of the review? What, then, should be the character of review questions?

14. What is the function of the examination? Discuss the utility and desirability of examinations in the work of the Sunday school.

## LESSON XIX

### The Class as a Social Institution

Now, as we approach the end of our course of study, it is time to put to ourselves again the question with which we began: *What is our aim as Sunday school teachers? What is the work we are set to do?* We then answered: *It is both to instruct and to train our pupils, that we may help them develop into the right sort of persons.* That answer remains true. But it is in itself too general. We are now ready to inquire more particularly into its meaning, and to get a more definite conception of just what it involves.

**Three conceptions of the Sunday school** have been held in recent years. They can be no more concretely set forth than in the "Survey of the Present Sunday School World," presented to the second annual convention of the Religious Education Association:

> "Three ideals seem to dominate the Sunday school world—the social, the educational and the evangelistic. Schools are classified as working under any one of these three, not by the entire absence of the other two, but by their emphasis upon one of these ideals.
>
> "(1) The social ideal regards the school as an aggregation of persons, a field for the operation of movements of various kinds that will interest the members. Success is measured by numerical standards. Some of the largest schools in the world belong to this class, though, as a whole, it includes the fewest in number. There is more or less educational and evangelistic work, but these schools are not organized about either of these ideals. The school itself, with its own *esprit de corps*, is the main thing.
>
> "(2) The educational ideal claims an increasing number of schools. They are organized with reference to the study of all matters bearing upon the religious and moral welfare of the scholar, according to the most improved modern methods. Intellectual equipment is here a prime consideration. Into such schools the paid teacher has already made his advent. They strive to profit religiously by the advance of general educational

movements, are found chiefly in centers of intellectual activity, and are officered and instructed by those whose personal interest in the educational aspects of religion is very keen.

"(3) The evangelistic ideal is overwhelmingly ascendant. Its aim is to secure a spiritual experience for the scholar conforming to the standards of the church with which the school is connected, to lead him to the public confession of that experience according to the rites of the church controlling the school, and to train him in the life to which he has thus been introduced. Within this ideal there is a varying degree of emphasis on the study of the Bible. In some schools (*a*) the educational element is reduced to a minimum as an effective factor in the experience sought. The teachers are rather preachers, or dealers in second-hand homiletics. Other energies than the scholar's personal search for Scripture truth are impressed into service. In other schools (*b*) the strongest emphasis is laid upon the honest study of the Scriptures as the most effective method of bringing the instrument of the Holy Spirit into direct and transforming contact with the life of the scholar. This study is depended upon as the most efficient discipline in helping the pupil to realize and enthrone the religious element of his nature. Between these two extremes there are (*c*) schools that greatly vary in their reliance upon Bible study in its relation to what is commonly called conversion.

"There are indications that the social, educational and evangelistic ideals will be combined with careful regard to their proper relation and proportion in the school of the future. Each asserts an aspect of the school that is real and essential. But the best work can be done only when the ideal is sharply defined." *

In our study thus far we have laid all emphasis upon the educational ideal and the distinctly educational type of the evangelistic ideal. Our fundamental conviction has been that the Sunday school is a school.† It is now time to correct the seeming one-sidedness of this position. *The Sunday school is indeed a social institution and an evangelistic agency, as well as a school. A true interpretation of its educational character must include the social and evangelistic motives. But*

* Bitting: "Survey of the Present Sunday School World," *Proceedings of the Religious Education Association*, 1904, p. 218.

† See Lesson XII., Section 1.

*neither the social nor the evangelistic ideal is rightly conceived in the statement above quoted. Neither is there stated in terms sufficiently objective.** This thesis we shall seek to explain and justify in this chapter and the next. In this we shall think of the Sunday school as a social institution, and in the next, of its evangelistic work.

1. **A new social consciousness** is characteristic of the life of our day.

(1) *We have come to see that human nature is essentially social.* Aristotle said that "man is by nature a political animal": Paul, that "none of us liveth to himself." But the conditions of modern life have given to these words a depth of meaning that they could not have for the men of an earlier time. Men were never so interdependent as now. The differentiation and specialization of industry, the massing of population in great cities and the ever-closer knitting of interests the world over by commerce and quick communication, make it impossible for one by himself to gain any fullness of life. It is only in association with his fellows that man becomes man. We are indeed "every one members one of another."

(2) *The conscience of the world has awakened to the duty of social betterment.* However true it may be that society is what individuals make it, it is no less true that individuals are what society shapes them to be. Within our own day this thought has become a conviction. It has aroused men to new duties. We are living in the midst of a great ethical revival. We have come to feel moral responsibility, not simply for the relief of the poor and sick and oppressed, but for the social conditions that cause poverty and disease and permit injustice. We are not content merely to heal the consumptive; we wage war against tuberculosis, the preventable disease. We do not stop with sending nurses to care for the sick babies of the tenements; we work for sanitary homes, pure milk and public playgrounds. We seek, not merely to save the sinner, but to strike at the roots of the sin; not merely to reform the criminal, but to prevent his ever being led into crime. These are days when life is indeed worth the living. Human interests have immeasurably widened and deepened within a generation. Opportunities for service to God and to humanity are greater than ever before. The moral horizon has broadened. To the beauty of individual goodness the vision of the Spirit has added the

* This statement must not be construed as a criticism of Dr. Bitting or his position. His task, in a "Survey of the Preseut Sunday School World," was to picture actual conditions; and his picture is true. Our point is that both the social and the evangelistic ideal *ought* to be more objectively conceived.

sweep and perspective of social righteousness. We are beginning to understand what Jesus meant by the *kingdom* of God.

(3) *Education to-day is socially motived.* The last decade has witnessed the "socialization of the school."

(*a*) The ultimate *aim* of education is the development of socially efficient men and women.*

> "Education is the fundamental method of social progress and reform. . . . The community's duty to education is, therefore, its paramount moral duty. By law and punishment, by social agitation and discussion, society can regulate and form itself in a more or less haphazard and chance way. But through education society can formulate its own purposes, can organize its own means and resources, and thus shape itself with definiteness and economy in the direction in which it wishes to move. . . . The teacher is engaged, not simply in the training of individuals, but in the formation of the proper social life. . . . I believe that in this way the teacher always is the prophet of the true God and the usherer in of the true kingdom of God." †

(*b*) The *method* of education is determined by its social motive. "We learn by doing." Since the school is meant to develop social efficiency and the spirit of helpfulness, its methods must appeal to the social instincts of the pupil. It must find things to do that will enlist his cooperation, and provide social situations that will call forth his latent powers. It must treat him, not as a servant, but as a son. It is this change of atmosphere and method, quite as much as that of subject-matter taught, that differentiates the public school of to-day from that of a generation ago. In place of the more formal of the old studies, there are manual training and domestic science; instead of the rigid "position" which the teachers of yesterday enforced upon us for sake of health and comeliness, there is the school gymnasium; and where once the birch rod ruled, there is now pupil self-government. The school has indeed become "a genuine form of active community life," ‡ in which the teacher is no longer despot, but leader and inspirer. Its atmosphere is that of the home.

(4) *True religion works toward a social end.* The prophets were preachers of social righteousness. Jesus' conception of the kingdom of God was that of an ideal social order, wherein men fulfill their son-

* See Bagley: "The Educative Process," pp. 58-65.
† Dewey: "My Pedagogic Creed."
‡ Dewey: "The School and Society," p. 27.

ship to the Father, and hence are brothers. When He pictured the Day of Judgment, he described the final test of life in social terms. "The stern questions are not in regard to personal and family relations, but did ye visit the poor, the criminal, the sick, and did ye feed the hungry?" * He sent forth His disciples, as He Himself had been sent, not to be ministered unto, but to minister. His call is to a life of service.

The new social consciousness of our day has but served to recall us to Jesus' own conception of religion. The source of religious life is indeed individual. It is in the heart, born again to immediate fellowship with the Father. But its aim is social. We must be about our Father's business. "The individual, instead of being called to save his soul from a lost world, is called to set his soul to save the world." † We are saved to serve. We are God's fellow-workers. And the church is the organization that marks our partnership. It is an instrument for social service.

2. **The work of the Sunday school is social,** therefore, just *because* it is religious and educational. If religion aims at the establishment of an ideal social order and the church is an organization for service, the church's school of religion must train for that service. And if education is social both in aim and method, the Sunday school is not true to its educational ideal if it lacks the social motive.

3. The practical question is: **What can the Sunday school do as a social institution?**

(1) *It can provide social life and enjoyment.* The social instincts demand satisfaction. Young people love a good time and delight in the company of one another. The Sunday school ought to meet this natural human craving. It should make the church a social center. It should provide a wholesome social environment. The means will vary, of course, with circumstances and resources—from the "festival" and "sociable" of the rural church to the elaborate system of clubs and guilds, sewing-classes and athletic teams of an institutional church in a great city. In any case a threefold good is attained: (*a*) Young people are kept from undesirable social pleasures and from places of amusement that are unworthy.‡ (*b*) They are attracted to the Sunday

* Addams: "Democracy and Social Ethics," p. 3.

† Peabody: "The Approach to the Social Question," p. 197.

‡ Not nearly all amusements, of course, are unworthy. But it is the vice of our generation to seek social pleasure too exclusively in *amusement* as opposed to *play*. We sit idle while we are entertained by someone else, instead of entering into the sport ourselves. The evil is greatly increased by the fact that our amusements have become *commercialized*. They are in the hands of men who seek to make

school, which thus gains a "point of contact" with their lives and an opening to their minds and hearts. (*c*) The young people away from home, of which all larger communities are full, are welcomed to the friendship which they most need, and gain new social ties for those that have been broken.*

(2) *It can maintain a social motive and atmosphere in its work of instruction.* We have already discussed this. We have said that the true recitation is social, and that the ideal method of teaching is co-operative. We have seen that the way to get the pupil to express the truth, and by expression learn, is to furnish motives and material and to provide social situations such as naturally call expression forth. We have noted how the social motive underlies the work that we may expect the pupil to do, from the play of the beginners and the story-reproduction of primary pupils, to the hand-work of the juniors and the study and research of older pupils.

> "Ideally, the Sunday school for children is not a school at all. In an Edenic condition it is an extension of the home. It is a place where a wise and good man or woman gathers a group of young people to whom he is in the truest sense a god-parent, in order to help and supplement the home in teaching the way of life and encouraging the children to walk in it. There are, of course, pedagogic laws to be applied in Sunday school instruction, but the aim should be not to imitate the public school. The model of the Sunday school should be rather the social settlement classes and clubs, where the teacher and scholars are simply friends, who meet because of interest in the same subject." †

Positively, this is an excellent statement of what the spirit of the Sunday school should be. But we must reject its implication that such a spirit and atmosphere is not to be had in the public school. As a matter of fact, in the few years since these words were first written, the whole development of our public schools has been in the direction indicated; and they are to-day better socialized in spirit and method

money out of them, and who are thus constantly tempted to pander to low tastes rather than to seek to elevate them. It may well be added that the social life of the church and Sunday school ought never to be commercialized. The money-making church "sociable" is anything but social. The "festivals," "suppers" and "bazaars" that were common not so long ago, were unjustifiable from the standpoint either of enjoyment, business or benevolence.

* See what was said concerning this need in Lesson VII., Section 5.

† Forbush: "The Boy Problem," p. 106.

than most Sunday schools. The word *school* is acquiring a new meaning.

We shall not take up the problems of *attendance* and *discipline* in this book. They will be treated in the book to follow in the present series, which will deal with the organization of the Sunday school. We all know that haphazard attendance and loose discipline are chief among the things that detract at present from its efficiency. But the remedy is not to be found in compulsion or greater rigidity of method. It is rather in the more whole-hearted working out of the social motive in class work and organization. We must make our pupils *want* to come to Sunday school and *work* when they do come, just because we give them something to do that they feel is worth banding together to do.

(3) *It can give its pupils a concrete understanding of social facts, and develop within them high social ideals.* The truths of God's Word are not isolated ; they dwell in human life. The Bible is the chief, but not the sole text-book of the Sunday school. Jesus spoke of Himself as "the way, the truth and the life." So must we teach, weaving truth and life together, that the gospel may be to our pupils what it was to the early disciples—a Way of life.*

We must do more than teach abstract doctrine, or even touch the heart. We must develop *practical wisdom.* We must help our pupils to *understand life*, its forces, its great interests and issues. Professor James once said that the aim of a college education really is "to make you able to know a good man when you see one." The aim of the Sunday school might be stated in much the same terms. We fail unless we make our pupil able to size up life's practical situations—rightly to know the good when he sees it and to choose it for himself.

The material for this teaching is as wide as life itself. Among the more important materials are :

(*a*) The biographies of the great religious and ethical leaders of Christendom ; such as Augustine, St. Francis, Savonarola, Luther, Melanchthon, Gustavus Adolphus, Knox, Bunyan, Whitefield, Wesley.

(*b*) History from a moral and religious point of view, tracing out the great political, social and ethical changes which have made the world what it is. This will include such topics as the growth of democracy, the development of religious liberty, the abolition of slavery, the establishment of universal education, the recognition of the rights of labor, the development of world unity through commerce

* The early Christians called their religion "The Way." See Acts 9 : 2 ; 19 : 9, 23 ; 22 : 4 ; 24 : 14, 22.

and quick communication, the progress toward international arbitration and universal peace, and the like—none treated abstractly, or with any attempt at a too general philosophy of history, but in concrete pictures of events and conditions.

(*c*) The history of the Church and its part in the uplift of humanity and the development of civilization. We believe that this development has been Christian, and that the world is what it is to-day only because Jesus lived and taught and worked among men.

(*d*) Missions, studied historically, and, most of all, practically. Ours is preeminently a missionary age. "The evangelization of the world in this generation" bids fair to become a fact. Opportunities are infinitely greater than ever before; and the Church is going about the task with a new energy and practical business methods. Every Sunday school ought to be a missionary Sunday school, if merely for the educative value of the missionary interest. Pupils should be made to understand the actual social and religious conditions in non-Christian lands, and intelligently to appreciate the methods, social and educational as well as evangelistic, now employed to reach their people.

(*e*) Social conditions and duties in our own land and time. What has been done and is yet to be done in social amelioration; methods of dealing with poverty, disease, crime and dirt; the education of the mentally and physically defective and those retarded in development; how to cope with intemperance, impurity, gambling, political graft; the problems of child-labor and divorce; the race-question; civic reform and city betterment; socialism and the public ownership of utilities. Such topics must, of course, be carefully graded. Most of them are for the elective courses of the senior and adult departments. But some aspects may be introduced earlier. Even in the junior age, children will be interested in child-labor, in ways of helping less fortunate children, and in the methods used to teach the blind and deaf.

(*f*) Problems of personal morality. With older pupils these merge into the larger problems of social service. But what we are too apt to deem the smaller moral problems of child-life should be explicitly considered, and right ideals presented.

> "Unless we make a list of them and grade each of our main divisions, many of the most vexed moral issues of a child's life will not be discussed with him in Sunday school. Gambling, for instance, assumes a prevailing form of its own for every period of childhood, and in each form presents to some children,

at least, a separate question in morals. No other department of the curriculum demands a more intimate knowledge of childhood and the actual surroundings and temptations of the particular children who form a given class of the school. Among other topics to be considered in a Sunday school course may be mentioned: fair play in games, games of chance, temper, personal purity, temperance, swearing, foul talk, practical jokes, predatory mischief, boys' fights, jealousy, gossip, superstitions, honesty, veracity, intellectual integrity, philanthropy." *

(4) *It can give its pupils something to do, and organize them in actual social service.* Religion is a *life*. We learn by *doing*. Both because it is religious and because it is educational, therefore, the Sunday school must organize its pupils for action. It must provide for the expression of the truths it seeks to teach, and for the carrying out in life of the ideals it presents.

We have already laid great stress upon the principle, "No impression without expression." We must now give to it a deeper meaning. *In the moral and spiritual realm, there is no genuine expression save that of deeds.* Life's real values are those of character and action. Not what a man knows, or even what he can say, but the way he lives, measures his final value to society. Not what your pupil can tell of Bible stories or the glibness with which he can recite texts, not the neatness of his written work, the precision of his maps, or the beauty of the models he has constructed, measure the success of your teaching; but rather the life he leads. *The only true preparation for life is life itself; the only effective training for service is to serve.* Every Sunday school class should organize for service. It should

* Hodge: "The Content of a Sunday School Curriculum," *Religious Education*, December, 1909, p. 433. Mention should be made in this connection of the Moral Education Board, with headquarters at Baltimore. Their aim is "to teach higher standards of morality through incidents of actual life as presented by photographs. Instantaneous photographs are taken of the incidents exactly as they happen in real life. These are made into lantern slides and thrown on the screen life-size. While the children are studying them they are taught what is right and wrong. 'Instantaneous photography takes sin in the act, and even a careless person will remember what kind of thing this is—when he has seen it done with the base details and evil face of the sinner!'" Lessons are prepared upon such topics as "The Gentleman," "Personal and National Thrift," "The True Sportsman," "What I am Going to Do when I am Grown Up," "What Men Think About Boys' Fights," each with from fifty to a hundred slides. These slides, with the text of the lesson, are sent for use to any school upon the payment of a small rental fee. See Mr. Baker's brief account in *Religious Education* for June, 1910, from which the above is quoted.

get something to do that is of real social value. It should hold its pupils by their common interest in this concrete piece of work. It should express its ideals in real endeavor.

4. This social conception of the Sunday school recognizes **the class as a natural unit of social and religious life.** It makes of the school in no unreal sense *a federation of classes.*

(1) *The teaching, work and organization should be carefully graded.* Life's changes are nowhere more evident than in the varying social attitudes of later childhood and adolescence. The content of the teaching, the type of class organization, and the character of the social service which it may seek to accomplish, must be determined with full regard to the natural interests of the pupils, the stage of moral development reached, and the opportunities and temptations of their social environment. In the junior department there may be a class of Boy Scouts, and one of girls who are interested in getting a Christmas tree ready for a children's hospital; in the intermediate and senior departments you may find one band making a study of missions in India and supporting a native preacher, while another, of older pupils, is interested in problems of philanthropy and the work of social settlements. Each has its particular work to do, and each an organization of its own.

(2) *This conception of the Sunday school makes practicable the coördination of all the Church's educational agencies.* We have multiplied organizations as new needs have been recognized, until the very strenuousness of our effort defeats itself. Besides the Sunday school there are boys' clubs and girls' clubs, gymnasium classes and athletic teams, mission bands for all ages from the tiny tots up, junior, intermediate and senior young people's societies, aid societies, the King's Daughters and the men's brotherhoods. There is overlapping of function, incoördination of effort, and a tremendous waste of energy. There would be a great increase of efficiency if each church were to bring all its educational agencies under one organization. Methods may, of course, vary. There may simply be a committee of the church council, to mark out the fields of the respective organizations and bring about the needed unity of effort. A federation of societies may be organized as a "church school" of which each would be a part. The societies, as a school of practice, may be correlated with the various grades of the Sunday school, as a school of instruction. The simplest plan would seem to be their incorporation within the Sunday school itself. Our conception of the class as a unit of social and religious life makes this quite possible. Each might even keep its

own name and distinctive organization—as a class name and organization.

(3) *This conception of the Sunday school makes possible a definite cooperation with home and public school.* If we ask parents and school teachers to help us *teach* religious truths to our pupils, we get little response. But if we organize to *do* something of social value, they can and will cooperate. The Boy Scout plan works as well in the public school as in the Sunday school. The sewing-circle of girls who are making doll clothes for less fortunate children, may enlist the members of a sewing-class in school. The class that is interested in the problems of good citizenship and social betterment, deals with these same problems in the high school, and finds the same ideals presented. The class organization of the Sunday school is paralleled by the pupil self-government of the public school. As for fathers and mothers, they usually want to help all they can; but when we ask them to help us teach, they do not know what or how. Ask them to help the children do some concrete thing, and there is no hesitation or difficulty. Upon the social side of our work we can easily enough enlist the other social agencies of the child's life; the work of instruction we must do ourselves.

5. **The organized adult class** stands naturally at the head of such a federation of classes into a school of social service. Once the social conception of the Sunday school is fully realized, the specific problem of the adult class will disappear. If the Sunday school is an organization for work in the kingdom, those who have worked in it from childhood up will remain in its service. The adult class will differ from others only in that its interests are mature, its grasp of social problems and opportunities more broad, its temper more truly practical, its standards of efficiency more exacting, and democracy more essential in its work and organization. Let the particular form of organization be what it will—the men's brotherhood, the women's missionary society, the mothers' club, the young men's league—each should itself become part of the Sunday school, or maintain an adult class in the Sunday school. None need surrender its independence of organization; it should be required simply to register its distinctive educational work as one of the elective courses of the advanced department.

The advantages of such a plan are manifold. We name only a few: (*a*) coordination of educational work and unity of practical effort within the church; (*b*) the practical service of the adult organizations will be more enlightened, since the educational motive remains; (*c*)

the children's practical service will acquire dignity in their eyes, because adults, too, are seen to share the same social motive and do work through the same institution; (*d*) there will be no evident time of graduation from the Sunday school.

6. **The socialization of the Sunday school and the coordination of the Church's educational agencies** are among the most important problems that we face to-day. This chapter has sought to interpret a movement that has only begun, and to indicate the direction in which the Sunday school will develop in the immediate future. Time may show that its interpretation is in certain details untrue, and some of its suggestions mistaken. There is need of experiment and wider perspective. But the principle will abide. The Sunday school of to-morrow will be social in aim and method.*

Two possible misconceptions must be guarded against: (1) The educational conception of the Sunday school, maintained throughout this book, remains true. Organization for service makes no less imperative the impartation of ideas and ideals. The Sunday school will remain a *school,* with the *Bible* its chief text-book. *Rightly viewed, the social and educational conceptions are one.* This we may learn from the public schools of to-day, with their new methods of instruction and discipline, their social atmosphere and aims. The essential characteristic of a school is not its rigidity of discipline or its imposition of tasks, but rather that it leads its pupils to *learn.* (2) The social conception of the Sunday school here set forth is far from the subjective and self-centered "social ideal" quoted at the beginning of this chapter. "The school itself, with its own *esprit de corps,*" is *not* "the main thing." It does not exist simply to maintain itself, or to furnish a field for activities that will interest its members. On the contrary, its fundamental note is that of *service.* It seeks to foster within its pupils the objective mood. It strives to lead their thoughts beyond self or school to life's real social values and to the good they can do.

* The best literature on this subject is to be found in the issues of *Religious Education* for the past few years. This is the journal of the Religious Education Association, and should be in the library of every Sunday school.

## QUESTIONS

1. What evidences are there in our day of a new social consciousness?

2. Discuss the social aim of education and show how the public school is becoming socialized in atmosphere and method.

3. What is the social aim of religion?

4. Why should the work of the Sunday school be social in aim and method?

5. Why should the Sunday school provide for the social life and enjoyment of its pupils?

6. How can the Sunday school maintain the social motive in its work of instruction?

7. What can the Sunday school do to develop high social ideas within its pupils?

8. What can the Sunday school do in the way of practical social service?

9. In what sense is the class the natural unit of social and religious life in the Sunday school?

10. How does this conception of the Sunday school provide for the coordination of the Church's educational agencies?

11. How does this conception of the Sunday school make possible definite cooperation with the home and the public school?

12. Discuss the place of the organized adult class in a socially organized Sunday school.

13. Does the social conception of the Sunday school make it any less a school? Give reasons for your answer.

14. How does the social conception of the Sunday school set forth in this chapter differ from the social ideal quoted at its beginning?

## LESSON XX

### The Spiritual Goal

**The final goal of our work is spiritual.** No mere accretion of knowledge or outward molding of action can save the world or bring a single soul to fullness of life. "This is life eternal, that they should know Thee the only true God, and Him whom Thou didst send, even Jesus Christ." The true teacher is an evangelist. He is not content merely to teach *about* God. He strives to reach the "hidden man of the heart." He seeks to help his pupils to *know God* in personal relation and so to love and serve Him. He will not rest until in heart and will they have consecrated themselves to their Father.

1. The work of the teacher thus centers about **the pupil's personal decision** to accept the love of God as revealed in Jesus and to live as God's child. Before this decision, we seek to prepare the pupil in due time to make it; after the decision, we try to help him the more fully to carry it out.

(1) *The natural time for decision is in adolescence.* We have seen that most conversions take place between the ages of thirteen and twenty-one. And it is not strange that this should be so. The awakening of interest in religion and the decision to love and serve God are natural aspects of that general expansion of selfhood and subsequent concentration of life that are the outstanding characteristics of adolescence. We should not attempt to force decision before this natural awakening; but we should bend every energy to see that decision is made before it is past and life has begun to acquire its set.

(2) *Not all decisions are of the same type.* They vary with age, temperament and experience. If we limit the term "conversion" to those decisions which involve a real turning about from a life that is now felt to be one of sin and failure, not nearly all adolescent decisions are conversions. Many children, brought up in godly homes and baptized in infancy, have never felt alienation from God and naturally choose to serve Him and to make public profession of their faith when they reach adolescence. Decisions at twelve and thirteen are usually of this type—the natural result of a normal religious nurture and of social suggestion. Those that come later, at sixteen or twenty, usually involve something of inward conflict. The character of this conflict varies with temperament and with the experiences that

have touched the life. Some are naturally more emotional than others. We make a great mistake if we attempt to force all decisions to conform to a single type, or to make a definite sort of spiritual "experience" a condition of church membership. The worth of a decision is to be measured, not by what lies behind it, but by what comes after; not by its own suddenness or emotional intensity, but by its practical results in the life. "By their fruits ye shall know them."

(3) *Decision is in any case an act of will.* It consists in the assumption of an *attitude towards God* and the choice of a *way of living*. It is to the willing side of the pupil's nature, therefore, that we must appeal. And it is his willingness to be and do that we must make the test of his fitness to make a public confession of faith and become a communicant member of the church. To this all doctrinal and experiential tests must be subordinate.

Experience follows action; and dogma follows experience. Historically, creeds and confessions are the expression rather than the cause of spiritual life among men. It is so with the individual. The comprehension of doctrines, the precise formulation of beliefs, the realizing sense of God's presence and love, cannot come first in the developing life. "If any man willeth to do His will, he shall know of the teaching." It is only by living with God that we come to know Him and to understand His truth. The important thing is to *get your pupil started on the life.*

(4) *Decision of some sort is bound to be made in adolescence.* The expanding life comes face to face with the issue. It will get set in one way or the other. It will include religion or let it alone. But to neglect God or to postpone the decision to serve Him is to reject Him. *To refuse to decide is itself a decision*—a decision *against* God.

2. **Making ready for the decision.** We cannot begin too soon to prepare the pupil to decide rightly when the issue presents itself. It is in early, middle and later childhood that the foundations of morality and religion are laid. We have already thought of the work of the teacher in these years.* By instruction, training and influence we will earnestly seek to implant true ideas about God and life, and to develop right habits and worthy attitudes. We will make ready for future decision, not by talking about it or by seeking to force it before the time, but by meeting wisely the particular interests and needs of each stage in the developing life. There are four great agencies of

* See what was said on this subject in Lesson XI., Sections 4, 6, 7 and 8, and in Lesson XII., Section 6.

spiritual nurture which we shall use—teaching, atmosphere, influence, and life itself.

(1) The **teaching** of the Sunday school should have a spiritual motive. This does not mean that the same truths are to be taught in every grade, or that every lesson should end with a spiritual application. It does mean that the teaching should be the expression of the teacher's own life with God and his steadfast purpose to guide his pupils to such a life; and that it should be grounded in his sympathetic discernment of the truth as revealed in God's word and his endeavor to give that truth to his pupils.

There must be moral and spiritual applications, therefore. The teaching fails that does not lead to definite, practical conclusions. The great question is: *Should the teacher state the practical conclusion and make the application for his pupils, or should he let them do this for themselves? Should his appeal to heart and conscience and will be direct or indirect?* It is hard to lay down general rules. Here, if anywhere, the teacher's work must be personal and individual. There are two reasons why the indirect method is usually better:

(*a*) If the teacher makes the application for his pupils, there is danger lest in their minds *his authority be substituted for that of the truth itself.* They may feel that it is but *his* conclusion, and a mere matter of opinion. Even so, they may accept it for a time. But the spiritual life can finally rest upon no authority other than the inward appeal of the truth itself. Life's ultimate convictions are grounded, not in what teachers say or churches formulate, or even in the Bible as an external authority forced upon us from above, but in the soul's natural response to the truth of God. He has made us for Himself. We know Him when He appears to us, and our hearts leap within us when His truth is seen. If we will but get the real meaning of His Word to men and present it clearly and concretely to our pupils, we need add no application of our own. They, too, will feel its truth and power. It will beget within them convictions which are abiding because the expression of their own deepest impulses and aspirations.

> "The object to be sought is to put the pupil in possession of the pure gold of truth; to beget in him personal convictions as near to the real truth as possible; to lead him to see and feel for himself the intrinsic and permanent authority of the teachings of the Bible, and to build them into his life. To do this let the teacher himself set the example of assuming towards the Scripture the humble attitude of the interpreter, and towards the

truth when found the humble attitude of obedience, and let him train his pupils to do the same. Let him seek not so much by the weight of authority to drive home the interpretation and application of the Scripture which he has discovered or accepted as to bring the pupil face to face in a receptive attitude of mind with the truth, that it may make its own powerful appeal. In short, let the teacher in the Sunday school understand that his duty is not to enforce his own views upon the pupil, but to lead that pupil to study the Bible honestly and to recognize and obey truth." *

(*b*) *Indirect suggestion is usually more potent than direct suggestion.* The strength of a suggested idea depends upon its ability to keep itself before the mind, and so to issue in action. And this ability depends in great part, it is clear, upon the absence of conflicting ideas which might claim the attention and inhibit action. A hypnotized subject will act upon any idea you suggest to him, simply because the hypnotic sleep prevents any conflicting ideas from coming to mind.† A little child will believe and act upon anything you tell him, just because he lacks the critical ideas which experience alone can bring. ‡

As we grow up and experiences accumulate and judgment matures, we become less open to direct suggestion. The presentation of any idea arouses within us a host of images, memories and other ideas, any one of which may be more attractive than that presented and may take possession of the mind to its exclusion. And if we are conscious that an effort is being made to influence our thinking or conduct, that very fact marshals conflicting ideas within us. We naturally put ourselves into an attitude of defence; we resist the intrusion of the foreign thought. If, on the other hand, the idea be introduced easily and indirectly, without shock or palpable effort to influence; if we are given, instead of a ready-made conclusion, the material from which to draw one of our own—it then seems a natural part of ourselves, holds our interest and influences action.

The Bible is full of illustrations of the power of indirect suggestion. We have already seen how Nathan took this method to bring home to David a sense of his sin.§ Jesus used it constantly. It is one reason why He taught so much by stories. When the lawyer, "desiring to justify himself," asked "Who is my neighbor?" Jesus gave no direct

* Burton and Mathews: "Principles and Ideals for the Sunday School," pp. 38, 39.
† See Lesson X., Section 1.
‡ See Lesson III., Section 5.
§ See Lesson XVII., Section 4.

answer, but began to tell a story. He told how a man was beset by robbers in a lonely road, and left naked and half dead; how in turn a priest and a Levite came that way and saw him lying, but "passed by on the other side"; how finally a Samaritan was "moved with compassion" and cared for him. The story ended with a question: "Which of these three, thinkest thou, proved neighbor unto him that fell among the robbers?" "He that showed mercy on him," came the answer. Only then, when the lawyer had gotten the idea for himself, did Jesus drive home the obligation: "Go, and do thou likewise." Take, again, Jesus' answer to Peter's question after the young ruler had gone away "sorrowful," preferring his riches to the kingdom of God. While Jesus was yet speaking about how hard it is for one who cares for wealth to enter into the kingdom, Peter broke forth with: "Lo, we have left all, and followed thee; *what then shall we have?*" That must have been a hard question for Jesus to hear. It revealed in His own disciple the very mercenary temper which had just caused the young ruler to turn away. Yet he manifested no sorrow or impatience; he uttered not a word of reproach. There was marvelous tact in the answer he gave Peter that day. There was *gentle irony*—"There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or mother, or father, or children, or lands, for my sake, and for the gospel's sake, but he shall receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands"—*and bitter fact*—"with persecutions"—*then the eternal truth*—"and in the world to come eternal life"—*finally a story*, comparing the kingdom to a householder who paid his laborers as he pleased, to everyone the same wage, no matter how long or hard he had worked. Thus *indirectly and concretely* Jesus led Peter to the thought that the kingdom of God is not built upon the principle of cash payment, and that service is its own reward.

In general, then, the indirect method of getting moral and spiritual conclusions is the better. It is indeed but an application of the principles of self-activity and apperception. Better to get the pupil to think for himself than to think for him. It is harder, of course. It means that you must present the material so concretely and vividly that your pupils will be sure to get the right conclusion.

Two qualifications must be made: (*a*) With little children the direct method may and must be used—because they are as yet unable to reason clearly for themselves, because they have implicit faith in the authority of those they love, because their minds are peculiarly open to direct suggestion. Only gradually is direct to be replaced with indirect

suggestion. (*b*) There are times when, in every grade and for every pupil, the teacher should directly, clearly and forcibly state the practical application of the truth. That teacher will fail of his highest efficiency who is afraid ever to appeal directly to the conscience and will of his pupil. The indirect method is often not in itself enough. Nathan followed his story with "Thou art the man"; Jesus turned the lawyer's conclusion into an obligation—"Go, and do thou likewise." Direct suggestion is at times needed, not as a substitute for indirect suggestion, but as its culmination. Do first all that you can to make the pupil see the truth for himself, then do not be afraid to apply it frankly, if you feel that such directness is needed to crystallize his convictions.

(2) The **atmosphere** of the Sunday school should be spiritually uplifting. The architecture and furnishings of the Sunday school chapel and classrooms, the pictures on the walls and windows of stained glass, contribute much to the total impression made upon the sensitive soul of the child, and mean more to the adolescent than we sometimes think. The chapel should be churchly, the classrooms attractive and usable; and the whole in good taste. Only true art is worthy of the God we serve; and only true art can help to bring our pupils to a sense of His presence.

The principle applies especially to the ritual of the Sunday school. We are too apt to think of it as a mere "order of exercises" for opening and closing the school. *But there should be at some time in the session a brief service of real worship.* It should be a time of genuine devotion, when pupils and teachers together join in praise to the Father whose Word they are studying, and in prayer that He may enlighten their minds and guide their lives. It should help the pupils to *feel* the reality of spiritual things, and train them in reverent worship. It should educate them, moreover, to understand and love the services of the church.

*The worship of the Sunday school is as real a factor in the religious education of its pupils as the lesson itself.* It should be carefully planned with this in view. (*a*) It should be clearly marked off as worship from the business, the instruction, and the social interests of the school. The period of ten or fifteen minutes spent in prayer and praise should be sacred. No announcements or reports, talks about the lesson or "remarks" by visitors, exhortations to benevolence or discussion of plans for securing better attendance, should be allowed to interrupt its spirit of devotion. Least of all should it be invaded by the blatant precentor with his waving baton and his incitement to sing

louder—"now the boys!" "now the girls!" "now all together!" All these may have their place, and some of them certainly do; but they are as much out of place in the devotional period of the Sunday school as they would be in the more formal worship of the church. (*b*) There is much room for improvement in the music of the Sunday school. Many of the songs in the so-called modern books and "services" for festival occasions are utterly unworthy, from the standpoint either of religion, literature or music. (*c*) If the worship of the Sunday school is to mean all that it should to the pupils, there must be grading here as well as in the teaching. Each of the larger divisions of the school should have its own service. There should be at least two such divisions, with one service for children under eight or nine, and another for pupils older than this. It is better to have three—one for beginners and primary children, one for the juniors, and another for adolescents and adults.

> "The principle of adaptation to the age of pupils applies here only less strictly than in the matter of instruction. It is as absurd to ask children of ten years to sing hymns reflecting the experiences of mature men and women as to ask their fathers and grandfathers to join in distinctively children's songs. Some hymns of praise are, perhaps, adapted to old and young alike. But the musical service of the school can be what it ought to be only when there is some separation of the school into divisions for the service as well as for the teaching. Each division needs its own hymns, and these, while always real hymns, should be adapted to the relative maturity of the members of that division."*

(3) The **influence of older persons** should be such as to lead the pupil toward the spiritual life. "Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend." Among the forces that shape the characters of men, there is none more potent than the contact of person with person, life upon life. And it begins early. The power of personal influence and association is rooted in the child's imitativeness and his sensitivity to the attitudes of others; it shapes the hero-worship of later childhood, and culminates in the susceptibility of the adolescent to social suggestion. The attitude of the youth toward religion will be in great part determined by the attitude toward it of the older persons with whom he is most thrown in contact and whom he most honors. For the sake of the children, therefore, the

* Burton and Mathews: "Principles and Ideals for the Sunday School," p. 191.

Sunday school should do all it can to enlist the hearty cooperation of parents, and to help them maintain an active interest in the church and its work. Above all, the teacher should see to it that he himself is what he would lead his pupils to be. He must be their friend, but more. He must in life and character command their respect and stand before them as an ideal. He must show forth the spirit of the Master. And his consecration must be open; he must be a member of the church.

(4) The life of the pupil in active Christian service may lead him naturally to wish to continue in that service, and to assume the larger responsibilities of spiritual maturity. This was made plain in the last chapter. We saw then that the Sunday school must organize its pupils in actual social service, if it is to accomplish either its educational or its religious work. We need only add now that this social service will fail of its highest end if the religious motive be not made perfectly clear. Without cant or sentimentality, but with simple and natural frankness, the children should be led to realize that what they are doing is God's work and what Jesus would have them do.

3. **Getting the decision.** When the time comes for decision, how shall we get the pupil to make it? We shall, of course, make a more personal appeal through all those agencies of spiritual nurture which we have used to make ready for decision. The material we teach will be such as to stir the will and arouse the conscience. In worship we shall strive to enlist the new feelings and aspirations of the heart of youth. We shall give ourselves in friendship and guard our influence, now of all times. We shall find for the expanding life something to do that may strengthen its dawning ideals and lead to new visions of service. And so the decision may come, quietly and naturally, as the result of some one of these influences or as the fruition of the whole long process of nurture that has gently brought the soul to spiritual maturity. In such a life, indeed, "the kingdom of God cometh not with observation."

But often there is needed some external occasion, some gentle shock or stimulus, to bring to a head the impressions which have been accumulating and to crystallize the convictions. There are many ways in which this stimulus may be applied. We shall consider only three of the more important: the confirmation class, decision day, and the personal talk.

(1) *The confirmation class.* Of all organized ways, this is the best. It is the traditional method of liturgical churches, such as the Lutheran and Episcopal. All denominations are coming in these days to use it.

Dr. Forbush, himself a Congregationalist, gives an excellent summary of it as used in the Episcopal Church:

> "In the Episcopal Church, where the catechetical method is not a recent experiment or a thing by itself, most of the objections to the use of the catechism are met because of its place in a larger system. It is but one wheel of an ecclesiastical machine. The baptized child is accepted as a member of the ecclesiastical family, potentially regenerate; the catechism is not a matter of special class instruction, but it is taught in the Sunday school; it is the tradition, and so the expectation, that the child will come forward in adolescence to prove his knowledge of the catechism in the confirmation class; instead of waiting for a cataclysmal conversion and a Christian experience before admitting the child into full communion, the child is admitted upon attaining a fitting age and reasonable knowledge of the catechism, and it is believed that in the solemn interim between the confirmation and the first communion, in the activities that follow or in the fold of the church with maturing character, spiritual life will actually appear. As far as the influence of this plan can be thrown about children, what could be more admirably planned to secure a quiet, normal Christian development and a minimum of loss of children in their growth from one period to another of life?
>
> "In the non-liturgical churches there must be some theory and scheme of the relation of children to the church which shall make it natural and expected that children should enter full communion. At present the theory, if there be one, sometimes seems to be that it is not natural but is rather surprising if this takes place." *

Essentially the same could be said of its use in the Lutheran Church. The baptized child is accepted as a member of the church, and looked upon as already the subject of divine regeneration—"received," as the Augsburg Confession so finely puts it, "into the grace of God." † He is taught the simpler truths of the catechism from his earliest years, and is made to look forward to the day when he can take upon his own shoulders the promises made for him by his parents, and so become

* Forbush: "The Boy Problem," p. 119. For sake of clearness without the context, a few words are inserted in the first sentence of this quotation.

† Article IX.: "recipiantur in gratiam Dei." The translation "are received into His favor" is a poor one.

a communicant member of the church. No sudden conversion or emotional experience is made a condition of confirmation ; the simple act of will is accepted, if examination shows that he understands the step he is taking. And Christian nurture does not cease then ; but the youth is helped to "grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

The virtues of the method are : (*a*) its systematic leading up to decision ; (*b*) its use of social suggestion to secure decision ; (*c*) its lack of hard conditions. It is clear that to realize these virtues in the highest degree, catechetical instruction should be a part of the Sunday school's work. The confirmation class should be, indeed, elective, but a part of the Sunday school organization in the intermediate department, so that pupils may feel it to be but natural to enter it. It should be taught by the pastor, and pupils should be allowed to substitute its work for the usual lessons. Unbaptized children should, of course, be given the same opportunity to receive catechetical instruction and to enter the confirmation class, as those who have been baptized.

The objections that have been urged against the method are : (*a*) that it is too dogmatic, teaching a creed before the natural time for creed formulation in later adolescence ; (*b*) that it degenerates into a mere memory exercise, the child committing set answers to questions and dogmatic forms which he cannot understand ; (*c*) that it is not fair to the child, entrapping him in a system of religious organization and instruction without his consent, and forcing decision too early by an undue use of social suggestion ; (*d*) that it provides in practice as real a means of graduation from the Sunday school as of entrance into full church membership. All these are real dangers. The first two may well be urged against much catechetical instruction. But they are not inherent weaknesses ; they depend upon the instructor, his conception of religion, and his ability to teach. The work of the confirmation class need not be, and ought not to be, a mere memorizing of dogmas ; the test of fitness for church membership ought not be the pupil's mastery of a doctrinal system, but his willingness to accept the love of the Father and his decision to live in Jesus' Way. The third objection is much the weakest. It may be urged against any system of education, secular as well as religious. We cannot wait to teach our children until they have grown able to choose for themselves what education they will have. They are "entrapped" without their consent in a social order, just because they are born at all ; and society must perforce imprint upon their tender minds its own customs and

ideals. To deny to a child any particular type of education is to educate him away from it, *without his consent.* To refuse to give religious instruction until the child can choose for himself whether he wants it, is to train him to be irreligious, *without his consent.* The real question in the early education of a child is not, Does the child want religion? but Do *we* want it? How seriously do *we* take it? Do *we* feel it to be one of humanity's vital interests? If we are ourselves in earnest about religion, we shall not hesitate to begin as early as we can to teach it to our children. The fourth objection brings out the greatest danger. It is quite possible that the pupil may look upon his confirmation as a graduation from set religious instruction, and may fail rightly to use his new freedom. He may feel that, having passed through all the forms needed to make him a member of the church, he is spiritually complete. And so what should be the beginning of a mature spiritual life becomes the end of all growth. Let us not as teachers deceive ourselves. We face, indeed, a different problem after decision, but a problem as real as that of getting the decision.

(2) *Decision Day.* A plan tried in many quarters is to set aside a day for spiritual ingathering, when all pupils who have not consecrated themselves to God are urged to make the decision. Usually cards are passed around to be signed, stating the desire to lead a Christian life. The best form of card, perhaps, is one that may be signed by every pupil, with four spaces in which the name may be entered as "Professing Christian and church member," "Professing Christian but not a church member," "Not a professing Christian," "God helping me, I choose henceforth to lead a Christian life." * A religious census of the school is thus taken, and embarrassment is avoided, as everyone signs a card.

(*a*) It is evident that in any case the method does not do away with the pastor's class for instruction preparatory to the assumption of the vows of full church membership. It is, in general, but one way of getting pupils to decide to enroll themselves in that class. And if the system of catechetical instruction be properly organized, there will be no need of such a method.

(*b*) The value of this form of social suggestion is questionable. To sign papers is contagious. It is common to have nearly a whole class sign or refuse to sign. Where the real stimulus is simply to "be with the rest of the fellows" on a day of this sort, the results are apt to be ephemeral. This form of social suggestion must be carefully distinguished from that of the long course of instruction, with confirmation as its natural issue, of which we have just been thinking.

* Mead: "Modern Methods in Sunday School Work," p. 249

(*c*) The appeal to make the decision should be individual, rather than collective. It is a question whether we have a right to make young people just entering their teens face the great alternative in a bunch. They need personal, face-to-face friendship and help.

> "In one warmly evangelistic church, two years ago, one hundred and fifteen cards were signed. Of these, twenty have since joined the church. . . . Then there is the leakage, the waste, the possible alienation. When one hundred and fifteen signed, over three hundred refused to sign. Is it not possible that these three hundred believe that they have thus disowned Christ? It seemed a daring act, but the heavens did not fall nor the lightning strike; next year it becomes easier to refrain. Is it wholesome thus to lead young souls up to the great alternative and let the will fail, and do it year after year?" *

(3) *The personal talk.* Whether or not there is systematic catechetical instruction, the actual getting the pupil to decide depends almost always upon a personal word. The decision is individual, and the alternative must be presented to each pupil for himself. And it must be in private.

> "It is a cowardly thing to say personal things and ask searching questions of a boy in the midst of his fellows which you would not dare to ask that boy privately in ordinary conversation. It is to protect these reserves thus rudely assaulted that a boy puts on with his Sunday suit a disguise which he carries to the hand-to-hand encounters of the Sunday school and junior society. The teaching which merely touches that artificial boyhood will be easily slipped off when the disguise is removed Sunday evening and the boy goes forth to the sport and freedom of Monday." †

It is undoubtedly harder to talk to one boy about religion than to

* Forbush: "The Boy Problem," p. 124. Dr. Forbush's whole discussion of this matter is eminently sensible. "The appointing of a State Decision Day and tabulating the totals from the day smacks of loving children statistically. . . . As the years go by I confess a growing distaste for the noise, the rush and the tremor of great machinery, and a deeper desire in any natural way possible to know my boys and girls so well that I may help keep them safe until the time when the finest of all spiritual fruitages comes, as the one hundred and tenth Psalm so beautifully describes it:

> "'On holy mountains out of the lap of the dawn
> The dew of Thy young soldiery *offers itself* to Thee.'"

† Forbush: "The Boy Problem," p. 180.

talk to ten; it takes more courage to ask personal questions in a private conversation than in a class discussion. But that is because they mean infinitely more. If you are really earnest about your work, you will at some time or other ask each of your pupils to decide this greatest of life's issues. It is a holy task, and you may well tremble before it. But to win a soul is the greatest thing that life can bring you. Did you ever notice the marginal reading of the great promise with which the book of Daniel ends? "*The teachers*," it says, "shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever."

*Do not overdo.* Do not ask your pupil too often, or too many personal questions. Life's deepest issues are too sacred to be talked of glibly. You may easily enough make yourself a bore and alienate the boy you would win, if you say too much about his soul. *Be natural.* Do not use "pious" phraseology. Talk to him directly, as friend to friend, and in the speech of common life. *Pick your time carefully.* Watch your opportunities. *Do not fail unless you must.* Every time that you put the alternative to a pupil and fail to win him, you make it easier for him to refuse again. "If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin; but now they have no excuse for their sin."

4. **After the decision** we shall help the youth to carry it out in actual life and service, and so to come to the full maturity of spiritual manhood. Our special problem in these years is to meet the intellectual and practical needs of *later adolescence*. After expansion, concentration. Life's dream-time is past; now it faces reality. Shall religion be lost through disuse or doubt? Shall the decision of early adolescence melt away with other aspirations of those days of vision? Or shall it remain the very center of life as it concentrates its energies and acquires individuality?

We have already thought of the characteristics of later adolescence, and of its needs.* We need add little now. We then spoke of three great reconstructive forces—education, love and social service. These same three we must use as we seek to meet the religious needs of youth. We now understand them better, however. Let us reverse their order and enlarge their scope. *Work, friendship and knowledge* are the three great agencies of spiritual nurture in that critical period between decision and full maturity—*work*, because the youth is intensely practical; *friendship*, because he is just taking his place in the great wide world; *knowledge*, because, a doubter and a creed-maker, he is forming those

* See Lesson VII.

ideas of life and the world about him that he will likely keep to the end of his days.

In all three the demand of the youth is for *reality*. The work you set for him must be real—something that the world needs, that someone must do or it will suffer lack. The friendship you give him must be genuine and whole-hearted, with no condescension or uneasy sense of an ulterior motive. The knowledge with which you seek to meet his doubts must be adequate and true, with no shifting of issues or falling back upon mere authority. Yet often enough the church and Sunday school have failed to meet this demand for reality. In place of knowledge, they have been heard to offer but the wearisome reiteration of texts. For friendship, there have sometimes been "calls" and "sociables"; for work, a self-centered ecclesiastical pottering about.

> "Of the dozens of young women who have begged me to make a connection for them between their dreams of social usefulness and their actual living I recall one of the many whom I had sent back to her clergyman, returning with this remark: 'His only suggestion was that I should be responsible every Sunday for fresh flowers upon the altar. I did that when I was fifteen, and liked it then; but when you have come back from college and are twenty-two years old, it doesn't quite fit in with the vigorous efforts you have been told are necessary in order to make our social relations more Christian.'" *

Happily, pastors of this sort are coming to be few. The church and Sunday school of our day are meeting the demand for reality. *Intellectually, socially, practically—in knowledge, friendship and work—the Church of Jesus Christ is to-day stronger and more virile than ever before.* Its mood is objective. It sees in itself an organization for work. It will be content with nothing less than social regeneration; and it means business. Every teacher should catch the vision of twentieth century Christianity, and make his own its intellectual vigor, its business methods and its concrete devotion to social ends. Teaching in this spirit, he will keep his pupils and lead them "from strength to strength," till "every one of them appeareth before God in Zion."

* Addams: "The Spirit of Youth and the City Streets," p. 160.

## QUESTIONS

1. What is the natural time for spiritual decision? Why?

2. Why should the act of will rather than an emotional experience or the intellectual possession of dogmas be made the condition of entrance upon full church membership?

3. How early in life may we begin to make ready for the decision? What are the chief agencies of spiritual nurture which we may employ?

4. Should the teacher make a practice of stating the moral and spiritual application of the lessons to the lives of his pupils, or should he let them make the application? Give reasons for your answer.

5. What authority should the teacher have for his teaching? What authority should he impress upon his pupils? Give reasons for this.

6. Compare direct with indirect suggestion as a means of applying the truth to the lives of pupils. Show how methods must differ in the various grades.

7. What factors contribute to the spiritual atmosphere of the Sunday school? Show how it may be made spiritually uplifting.

9. What should be the aim and character of worship in the Sunday school?

9. What can we do to use most effectively toward spiritual ends the power of personal influence?

10. How can the life of children in social service be made an agency of spiritual nurture?

11. What are the positive values of the confirmation class as a method of getting the young to accept God's love and enter His Church?

12. Discuss the objections to the catechetical method and the confirmation class.

13. Discuss the value of Decision Day as a method of securing spiritual decision.

14. Why is a personal talk or question nearly always needed to secure the pupil's decision to serve God? What cautions should the teacher bear in mind in undertaking this personal work?

15. Discuss the teacher's problem after his pupils have made the decision and entered into full church membership.

## LESSON XXI

### The Ideal Teacher: Jesus

There remains to be said about our work the one thing that, more than all others, expresses its dignity and worth. *It was Jesus' work.* He, too, was a teacher. We stand, therefore, in a unique relation to Him. Other men, indeed, may do His will as completely as do we. On the farm and in the shop, behind the counter and at the office desk, men can and do follow Him. The life may be His, whatever its outward form. Its Way may be His, through whatever thickets of circumstance the path of duty may lie. But we, who have chosen to teach, follow directly in His footsteps. We make His own business ours. And so He is our Ideal, not only in the general sense in which we share His example with all humanity, but in the very particular form of His words and deeds. He is not only the Ideal Man; He is our Ideal Teacher.

We remember how, time and again throughout our study, when we sought a concrete example to illustrate the principle of teaching of which we were thinking at the moment, we went to Jesus' life. He was the Master Teacher of all time. No other could have taken a dozen unlearned countrymen, and in less than three years have so taught them that he could leave his own work in their hands. No other's teaching has been so naturally and immediately adapted to the particular situations he faced, and yet so universal in its truth and eternal in its appeal, unbound by time and place. Yes, it may be said, but that was because He was the Son of God. That is true. But it is just as true that Jesus' teaching had the wonderful power it had because *He knew how to teach.*

There is no space, in this brief lesson, to discuss Jesus' methods of teaching with even an approach to adequacy of treatment. And it is perhaps as well. Ideals are to be seen and followed, rather than talked about. What we need is not so much a description of Jesus' methods as a concrete acquaintance with them. We must study them for ourselves as they are recorded in the gospels, grasping not only the outward form but the inner spirit. There is no better training for a Sunday school teacher than a careful study of the life of Christ, from the point of view of His character as a teacher. This chapter aims only to present an outline for such a study.

1. Jesus taught, as any true teacher will, both by word and deed. We find, first of all, that **His sayings reveal the methods of an Ideal Teacher.** He taught by illustration, story and question. His lessons had preparation, presentation and conclusion. He began always by finding a point of contact; He presented essentials only; and He reached a definite conclusion.

(1) What most immediately impresses one who reads the sayings of Jesus is *His remarkably effective use of illustrations.* His teaching was never abstract. He aimed, as Wendt says, at *popular intelligibility;* and He succeeded as no other teacher ever has. He always accompanied the statement of a general principle with a particular and concrete example. He was ever ready with a comparison or an apt analogy. With figures of speech and stories he made the truth plain to the common man.

(2) *He was a wonderful story-teller.* His stories were short, simple and full of action. They had point. He knew when to tell one; and He always told it well. Even as we read them now, they make us see the things they tell.

(3) *He was a good questioner.* He taught, not so much by lecture, as by conversation. He tried to make His hearers think for themselves. He understood the value of cooperation between teacher and pupil in discovering the truth. The man who came to Him with a question was usually asked one in return, and from His answer the truth was developed. "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?" asked a lawyer. "What is written in the Law? how readest thou?" was the answer. When Simon worried over the presence of a sinful woman, Jesus told the story of a creditor who forgave two debtors, the one a large sum and the other a small one. "Tell me, therefore, which of them will love him most?" "He, I suppose, to whom he forgave the most." "Thou hast rightly judged." Then He went on to make clear, not only the right attitude in this particular case, but the great principle of love and tolerance which is involved.

Jesus was not afraid, when the occasion demanded it, to use the question in His own defence. When the priests asked concerning His authority as a teacher, He put them on the horns of a dilemma. "The baptism of John, whence was it, from heaven or from men?" They dared not answer. "Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things." Then He asked another question and told a story: "But what think ye? A man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work today in the vineyard. And he answered and said, I will not: but afterward he repented himself, and went. And he

came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I go, sir: and went not. Which of the two did the will of his father?" They said, "The first." "Verily I say unto you," answered Jesus, "that the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you. For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not; but the publicans and the harlots believed him: and ye, when ye saw it, did not even repent yourselves afterward, that ye might believe him."

(4) *Jesus always found a point of contact.* His teaching moved upon the plane of His hearers' own experience. His illustrations were drawn from nature about Him and from the common life of the people; His stories were of events such as happened every day. Moreover, in every case where we have record of the particular circumstances, we find that His teaching grew out of the immediate situation. It was in answer to the spoken question or to the unspoken interests and needs of those whom He addressed. He called the fishermen of Galilee to be "fishers of men"; He bound Nathaniel to Him by showing that He understood the inward longings of his heart; to the woman He chanced to meet at Jacob's well, He spoke of the "water of life"; to the multitude who would make Him king because He had fed them, He preached about the "bread of life." He often asked, as He did the lawyer, some question that would bring out what His hearer already knew or thought of the matter in hand; and He used these old ideas then as a basis for the new.

(5) *Jesus' teaching dealt with essentials.* With all His concreteness, He never moved upon the surface of things. His illustrations never tied Him down to mere particulars; His popularity of exposition never begat shallowness of insight. He always grasped the great principle that underlay any issue that presented itself to Him; and He always succeeded in making that principle clear. He seems, indeed, to have deliberately aimed at "*the greatest clearness in the briefest compass.*"* In selecting examples and illustrations, He always chose such as brought out in the boldest possible relief the principle He was seeking to impress. *Even if our brother is in the wrong*, it is our duty to seek him that we may be reconciled; *even if one wantonly smites us*, the obligation holds to return evil with good. If an unjust judge "who feared not God and regarded not man" will grant the prayer of a poor widow, just because he gets tired of her continual coming, shall not the good God hear the prayers of His children? To make

*Wendt: "The Teaching of Jesus," Vol. I., p. 130. Wendt's treatment of this point is illuminating.

clear how completely service in God's kingdom must be free from the ulterior motive of reward, He told the story of a householder who paid for one hour's labor the same wage as for twelve—"so the last shall be first and the first last." It is an exaggeration; but an exaggeration that brings out with unmistakable clearness the point that He wished to make.

(6) *Jesus always brought out of His lessons a definite conclusion.* Most often, moreover, He succeeded in making His pupils reach that conclusion for themselves. We recall the examples of His use of indirect suggestion cited in the last chapter, and those of His power as a questioner in this.

Wendt sums up as follows the impression to be gained from a careful study of Jesus' methods as revealed in His sayings:

> "A review of the characteristic features of Jesus' method of teaching proves what a wonderful art and power of popular eloquence he possessed. He avoided pedantic modes of teaching and the petty arts of the scholastic learning. The particular methods He employed by preference were not indeed new, but were rather the customary and natural means of popular discourse; yet He handled them with greater ease and precision, and with higher originality in details, than other teachers. A rich fancy and an acute judgment were His equipment—a fancy which provided Him with ever fresh material for His examples, pictures and similitudes; acuteness of judgment, which enabled Him to grasp the essential point in the instance on hand, and to find the fittest phraseology and forms of presentation whereby the weightiest thoughts should be most forcibly expressed. We can well understand how the discourses of Jesus, even apart from the significance of their contents, would fill the hearers with admiration by their natural, lucid and pithy style, and force the declaration from their lips: 'He speaks as one that hath authority, and not as the scribes;' that is, not from a limited stock of traditional apparatus laboriously applied, but in sovereign disposal of an abundance of power, like a true orator 'by the grace of God.' . . .
>
> "What, however, is above all wonderful here is, that the man who had such rich material of popular eloquence at command, has used it ever in strict subservience to the purposes of the religious thoughts to whose announcement He devoted His life. Throughout His recorded discourses we never find that He has given free play to His fancy in order merely to please Himself and

others, or for the sake of showy embellishment. Never has He employed His sharpness of judgment for the mere purpose of exercising His dialectic skill upon His own thoughts or those of others, or beyond what was called for in order to the illustration or exposition, the establishment or confutation, of those thoughts. The artistic form of speech was never with Him an end in itself, so as to turn attention upon itself and away from the matter of discourse. The one aim of Jesus in regard to style and method was to make His meaning plain, and show the importance of His ideas. Therefore, He never used the arts of speech in order to beguile His hearers by too lightly carrying them over the difficulties of His teaching, or smoothing over its offensive strictness. On the contrary, He has everywhere spoken with perfect plainness, and has uttered, with the utmost strictness, unpalatable declarations and hard commands, which practically followed from His teaching, without ever palliating them or making concessions. He employed, indeed, all his skill and power of speech in order to convince His hearers of the truth of His statements and the rightful authority of His precepts. It was no object of His to present His teaching as something specially novel and peculiar, and, because of its higher and supernatural theme, as something strangely contrasted with natural and earthly knowledge. He has, indeed, intentionally emphasized the relationship of what He taught and commanded to the ordinary earthly phenomena and the common modes of human conduct. No facts of nature or of human life appeared too small to be unable to aid Him in bringing His teaching of the kingdom of God home to the human understanding." *

2. Jesus taught as well by what He did as by what He said. **His actions, too, were those of an Ideal Teacher.**

(1) *He frequently taught by object-lessons.* When the disciples asked who should be greatest in the kingdom of heaven, he set a little child before them. At their last supper together, He girded Himself as a servant and washed their feet. Many of His miracles were lessons as well. The curse of the barren fig-tree, for example, can be understood in no other light. It was an acted parable.

* Wendt: "The Teaching of Jesus," Vol. I., pp. 148-151. The chapter from which this is taken, on "The External Form of the Teaching of Jesus," is the best treatment of the subject for the teacher to read. Stevens' little book on "The Teaching of Jesus" is excellent, as is also the brief treatment in Sanday's article on "Jesus Christ" in Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible.

(2) *Both His words and His actions were socially motived.* Jesus lived among men, and entered naturally and wholesomely into their social relations. His teaching has been called unsystematic. It was so in a sense. He taught no formal system of dogmas; He took no pains to begin one lesson where the last had left off. He did not keep set school, and seems to have cared little for the precise theoretical organization of the truth within the minds of His disciples. But His teaching was thus unsystematic simply because it was so *vital*. He taught, not subjects or creeds, but *men*. What He said and did always bore an immediate relation to the situation He was in, and to the needs and aspirations of those before Him.

(3) *His training of the twelve was by life with them and for them.* He has given us in this a perfect example of education through social association in a common task. Not content merely to teach them by word of mouth, He bade them follow Him. He gave Himself to them, and gave them work to do for Him. They went with Him in His journeys; they dwelt constantly in His presence. They helped Him preach His kingdom; they too worked miracles. He even sent them out for themselves, to travel throughout the land teaching and healing. He was preparing them to take His place and to carry on His work; and He prepared them thoroughly. They learned by doing. They caught His spirit by association with Him. Through knowledge, friendship and work He brought them to spiritual maturity.

(4) *Jesus was Himself the embodiment of all that He taught.* Here was the secret of His power, both with those He met in ordinary social ways and with the chosen band of twelve. His was the example and influence of a Perfect Life. He was Himself the Ideal that He sought to teach.

3. **In knowledge Jesus was an Ideal Teacher.** He knew the truth; and He knew men. There was never doubt or question in His mind as to what to teach. His vision penetrated beneath every husk of circumstance to the great essential truth of God. No more did He hesitate over the right way to approach particular men. He understood human nature. He was quick to discern the needs of the sinful, the doubting, the self-righteous, the perverse and the slow to comprehend. And He knew how to meet them, each in his own way. He recognized fundamental differences of temperament and habitual attitude. There was deep insight and shrewd practical wisdom as well as patient love in the way that, day after day, he handled the impulsive Peter. Very different, yet just as wise and loving, was His treatment of Thomas, honest and slow to comprehend.

4. **The source of Jesus' knowledge and authority made of Him an Ideal Teacher.** It was in His perfect sonship to God. And by sonship we here mean not His unique position as the eternal Son of God, but rather His maintenance throughout His earthly life of the filial relation to God. He lived always in His Father's presence. He let nothing cloud His vision of the Father's Will. He kept the way always open between His mind and that of God; and His heart returned the love that the Father's heart bestowed upon Him. It was from this source—this perfect filial relation—that He drew the strength that kept Him sinless, and the truth that He taught with the freedom and authority of perfect inward conviction. And this source of life and truth, let it never be forgotten, is the deepest need of every man that would teach another.

5. **Jesus' supreme faith made Him an Ideal Teacher.** He had supreme faith in God, the Father who had sent Him. He had supreme faith in men—in the goodness of their fundamental instincts and aspirations, in the possibility of their redemption from sin, in their sonship to God and their eternal worth. He had a supreme faith in His work—the redemption of men and the establishment of the kingdom of God. He never doubted its worth or its ultimate success.

Jesus manifested His faith, not only in all that He said, but even more in what He did. He gave His life for men. And He did it gladly, because of His faith in men. A less great teacher would have wanted to live longer, to teach a little more, to make more sure that his pupils could carry on his work after him. One of less faith would have feared to entrust the spreading of the gospel to a group of disciples whom he had taught but three years, and who had been so slow to learn. But Jesus ceased His earthly teaching and left this mortal life willingly, with supreme faith in the men whom He had trained to take up His work as well as in the Father whose work it was and is.

Let us draw from this our parting lesson. *The teacher needs to be a man of faith.* There are many times when our work seems empty and success far away: and we may easily enough wonder whether it is really worth while. May God help us then to hold fast to our faith. And we need, above all else, the kind of faith that can give up when the time comes, and let another go on with the work that we have been able to do only that far. The teacher's work is by its very nature vicarious. We teach that another may know. We serve that our pupils may become able to dispense with our service. We begin

a work within them that they must finish for themselves. We all need to pray for the love that will move us to lay down our life for our pupils, and for the faith that will gladly entrust to them the work that we can never finish.

## QUESTIONS

Will you read through one of the gospels, considering Jesus' life from the standpoint taken in this chapter? Make an outline of the points brought out in the chapter, and find illustrations from the gospel for each of them. Take several of Jesus' parables, and show in detail how they meet the requirements of good story-telling and of effective illustration, and how they show Jesus' ability to bring out essential points clearly and vividly. Make a list of questions that Jesus asked, and see how He made them serve the purposes of His teaching. Find instances of His perfect knowledge of human nature, and His ability to adapt His teaching to the needs of the individual. Find some of the sayings and acts that prove His supreme faith in God, in men, and in His work.

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